

FALLEN ANGELS

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by HENDRIK DE LEEUW



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PREFACE

I HAVE closed my notebook. And if I am asked what I have found, then I must confess that I found only what I expected, whether the sun rose over the huge amatory enterprises of the men of Nippon, or whether it set over the flower boats of the Yangtse, or whether it suffused with its golden glimmer the kronya houses of Sidi-Bel-Abbès or the smart pavements of Paris and New York. It all concerns itself with a great barter of bodies, yellow, brown, black and white—a trade in human souls in exchange for the few things that money can buy.

But I did answer one very vital question which I had asked myself over and over again, having compared the systems of prostitution in these many countries, whether the French in their own country and in Africa, and the Japanese have not solved the matter to an extent, in their realization that eradication, so long as man is created the way he is and so long as economic strife and ignorance remain, will never be a *fait accompli*.

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In America, where we have secured a tremendous "victory" in abolishing the brothels, the problem has not been solved at all. After all, it must be obvious to any thinking man or woman, who is not blinded by a morality that is puritan or prudish, or by his or her own frigidity, hypocrisy, morbidity or sexophobia, that an evil kept in the open within certain bounds is preferable to an evil rampant and promiscuous under cover. For when it is clandestine, it breeds not only unrestrained debauchery and perversion, but fodder for future vices in a crop of individuals in a continual state of sexual repression—the subjects of obsessional impulses. All these sex-starved men and women are potential degenerates and perverts.

Some writers profess that the human race is decaying, and that the Orient has learnt from the Occident many of its so-called civilized ways, while the West has borrowed all the East's strange immoralities. This is something that I found not to be true. For now that the task is finished I must confess that Western cities are indeed more immoral in many senses of the word than the Eastern ones. And heighten as we may the true picture of conditions in Japan, China, and Egypt, now that I have come to the end of the road, I have seen that the East is not as loose and depraved as, for instance the Algerian and Moroccan cities where the systems are somewhat confused, and the luxurious displays of the Japanese Yoshiwara have certainly not sunk to the level of some of the revelries that I had

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occasion to attend in New York. As I emphasized in "Cities of Sin,"* Occidental perversities are unknown to the Eastern mind. I found in them no veneration of sensuousness, debauchery, or sensual ceremonies and orgies that degrade the Western peoples.

But we must admit that though the systems of other countries have kept the evils of prostitution within bounds, yet they are all systems fostered basically by greed, taking advantage of human weaknesses and necessity, in which the women pay the piper in the end. And whether it is the Japanese authorities who have a finger in the luscious pie, or the social dregs and pimps and capitalist traders in flesh, it will always be a dirty business in which the individual will suffer and be enslaved. And so it comes back to this, that there would seem to be only one way to do away with all this, and that would be by proper sex-education, by exterminating desperate want and greed and economic pressure that drive men and women into vicious and immoral ways. So much hide-and-seek could be prevented, for instance, if the public were allowed a free dissemination of knowledge, instead of being fed on useless and veiled prattle. For it is prudery that defeats true modesty and well-being of body and mind. I, for one, am an advocate of the proper sex instruction right at the fountain of youth, but I would not like to omit adults from the curriculum since many are wholly ignorant of the vital things in life. I would like to see public clinics established where advice is given, and

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information about birth control and venereal disease. After all, even the Church must admit that one should not be ashamed to name and to talk about what God himself has not been ashamed to create. Let us revise our antiquated laws, instead of vice squads and prisons let us have schools and clinics and occupational training camps, and bring into the clean air that which has become filthy through being kept underground. Then we may become truly leaders in the march of civilization and not be forced to admit that the old way of the old civilizations is the best, because at least it keeps immorality within bounds and defined classes of society. But, alas, the following Spanish proverb comes to my mind while writing these words: "mankind is an ass that kicks those who would relieve him of his panniers."

Now, since this book was written, social service organizations and truly earnest authorities in this city have again attempted to take the cases of wayward girls out of the courts into a humanized clinic. But while I laud the efforts of the Woman's Court Alliance, as I have lauded the efforts of that great humanitarian, Judge Jonah Goldstein, and the non-sectarian group of social workers for their proposals, it now pains me to read that their plans have foundered on the rock of economy.

It will always seem that commercialized vice with its graft and rackets is a favorite son of some politicians and racketeers who will fight to the bitter end for its

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maintenance. Before me now, as I am writing, I have a series of articles by Marguerite Mooers Marshall, relevant to Brooklyn's jungles of vice, as rampant as in the worst streets of Shanghai, Port Said or Marseilles. And yet the Woman's Court in Adams Street in Brooklyn, so I have read, is to be taken to Manhattan to be consolidated with other similar Courts and Brooklyn's vice jungles are assured of a long and unhealthy life.

And thus I have come to the end of my investigation, bearing on the traffic in women in the major cities of the Western World. And again I express the wish, with which I finished my preface of "Cities of Sin": "If the only thing that I may reap would be enlightenment of the masses, I consider myself well compensated for my travels and my work."

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ALGIERS

The Ouled-Nâils in the Rue Bab-Al-Zoum

ALGIERS

The Ouled-Nails in the Rue Bab-Al-Zoum

"HEIN, monsieur; the Moor attacked her with the frenzy of an Arabian steed." These were the words a Frenchman whispered to his companion, in the Boulevard Carnot of Algiers, on a terrace of le Café Drouard, where I was lounging at a round, marble-topped table, watching the rhythm of things and listening languidly to the babel of voices. Thus I learned my first lesson in Arab psychology.

A little flair of Paris! As a band lilted soft, modern tunes, officers and civilians swarmed the café—German, French, Italian and English, Spaniard and Arab, Maltese and Jew, tirailleurs, spahis, Zouaves and légionnaires—sipping their coffee and absinthe, amer picon or beer, smoking and bragging amidst mirth and laughter and oaths, while Arabs, Moors, Berbers and Kabyles, in burnouses and gandouras, threaded their way listlessly through the crowd.

Algiers in the evening is a city of spooks and of an almost unbelievable and ethereal brittleness. The moon emerged from behind tufts of white clouds in a light-bluish sky, and the Milky Way and the rest of the sky scintillated with thousands of little stars spread over the earth like a beautiful, flimsy shawl.

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Beyond the large haze of the bay and out of the depths of amethyst glows and lilac mists rose the rugged crests and white peaks of the snow-topped Atlas and Djurdjura Mountains. Below stretched the fertile and narrow plain of Mitidja, green hills, valleys and beautiful gardens, blazing, during the day, with the yellow of oranges and the green of the vineyards.

Set in the curve of the lovely bay is Algiers proper, with its long rows of white, storied houses, climbing, as it were, on each other's shoulders. And away in front of the bay, the rocky islets, nicknamed by the Arabs of the past, El Djezair. And above it all dwelt the all-highest of the pirates of old—the Tyrant of Algiers, in the Kasbah, the fortress of the Dey—who claimed his share of each seafarer's booty.

Now, my notebook had the following notation: When in Algiers, do not overlook the Kasbah, the Rue d'Isly and the Rue Bab Azoum, and La Belle Fatma, the dusky prostitute in the Rue Barbarousse, if you want to see the lusty Moor at his best.

But to understand the Moslems, one must go back into their history.

From the wastes of the desert to the Mediterranean the Dark Continent abounds in ruins of Roman cities, all mute sentinels of a mighty empire and civilization, and of a Church drenched in the blood of martyrs. There were great numbers of Roman cities where Al-

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gers and Tunis and Tangier now stand. Carthage, the one-time rival of ancient Rome, and many others like Thysdys, whose amphitheater gave room to 60,000 people, and Cæsarea, the Athens of the West, were all outposts of a mighty empire. There were proud and great cities with which few of our modern cities in the West can compare in magnificence and luxury. And their names are forgotten, except where the spades of archæologists clear the sites that reveal their vast foundations.

Here, then, stood the sites of earliest Phœnician settlements, and here burned the fires of Baal Moloch, and here Ashtaroth was worshiped, until some centuries later the land became the scene of early Christian worship.

But to understand the strength of Islamic power, its creeds and its cruelties, we should really go back to the period when Ahab was King over Israel. Ahab established the worship of Baal. His dynasty sought a fusion of Phœnician Israelites and Jews into a single religion and people. His faith, originating in the superstitions and cruelties and licentiousness of older faiths and creeds, lingered for centuries in the unfathomable, mysterious desert of Arabia.

While Carthage, of the Phœnicians, has been buried hundreds of years, a spell—something mysterious, mythical and strange has lingered, to which peoples of all ages have succumbed. The dramatis personæ of this epic is the Arab, squatting during the day in the

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shadow of his palm, at night seeking surcease of his laziness in the dark, smelly cafés over which the derbouka sounds its gloomy knell. He is a man who was once master of the universe—symbolic of a character that is bigoted, self-centered, self-sufficient and cruel. He is not troubled a bit by the spirit of unrest that has rolled over his country. Having no desire whatever for action, he lets himself go, in utter self-ease. He is of a race that could conquer, but having conquered could not govern.

The Phœnicians, like the Romans, were elastic in their divinities, adopting foreign deities as they saw fit. They were metamorphic, for their Baal was at once destructive and beneficent. Tanit was the goddess of both chastity and licentiousness, which finally coalesced into a sexual dualism, symbolic, on the one hand, of spiritual development and, on the other, of grossest and most debasing materialism. The Phœnicians finally reached, but not without trials and tribulations, the platform of Judah and Mahomet, on which latter the Arab creed is based, a conquering faith that was based on one God, the merciful and compassionate. Yet faint remnants of Baal, that carried with it appeals to lust of the flesh, unspeakable memories of orgies that once prevailed at Sodom and Gomorrah, and have always exercised great attraction for primitive peoples, continued for centuries throughout earlier Judaic and later Islamic religion.

The message of Mahomet came as a harbinger of

hope and deliverance. Against cruelty and paganism, the idea was set up of a God before whom all Mohammedans were equal. It emulated therein the earlier Christian faith, and was a religion of strong personality as opposed to the evils of idolatry and superstition and priestcraft. It gave to even the most illiterate a creed that he could understand.

Nevertheless, this fiercely monotheistic faith inculcated by Mahomet into the great concoction and invention, the Koran, still in fact engaged the aid of superstition in a different form, and that was perhaps the secret of the success of this simple creed. While Mahomet prohibited "abominable idolatry," a fetish was made of the Koran. He made of this great book something greater than God himself, and it was used exclusively in a really superstitious, extrawordly way. Man's weaknesses are dismissed as instruments of fate, of a Kismet which is the universal law, and man is only the creator of his own temporal destiny. And so it comes as a natural contradiction that side by side with prayer we still find rapine and murder and brutal and nameless vices.

The French, who maintain—or rather, first established—law and order, have not changed the natives themselves. They tactfully sway scepter outwardly with great success, but being Latins, they lack race prejudice and mingle with the natives as their equals. They have not been so tender in their dealing, it is true, yet they have made no efforts to suppress the old faith.

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They merely exercise tolerance and avoid any undue outward friction. Underneath we may discern an ever-smoldering fire that still harbors hatred and rancor. For the Moslems, with few exceptions, will remain France's enemy until their dying day. The Frenchmen who have come to the Barbary States have taken on the ways of the land.

France has conquered well and taken hold but there is no telling whether its soul is in danger. Native customs, languages, temperament and instincts maintain their course and flow along, stunning all with their fathomless depths. The Moslems have changed little from the habits and customs of their ancestors, who, it is safe to say, occupied the land centuries before the earliest Roman warriors flooded the continent. A people that has lived for thousands of years amid sand dunes and desert, carved by the wind into all sorts of whorls and ripples and ridges and undulations, heart-breaking in its apathetic and morose state, is the very symbol of eternity. The immensity of the desert is bound to have nourished the sterile and fatalistic and cruel creed of the native, and has made his mind and attitude different from that of any other man in this world.

Few men in the world are such ardent lovers as the Arabs of Algiers and the Moors of Morocco. They will forsake home and family and will fall into a life of the most debauched savagery. Even the most humble

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Moor with little to spend shows a barbaric amorous violence, throwing whatever he possesses on the altar of lust—just to live, in the span of a few hours, the life of a plutocrat. He is ready at all times, with his peculiar outlook on life, to descend life's ladder with almost bestial passion, into the deepest pit.

The Moor lacks entirely the gregarious instinct that in most men produces filial and social affections which inhibit primitive propensities in keeping with the standards set by modern society. For possession of a woman he will engage in sanguinary quarrels, and stubborn and incessant struggle, whether she be his kind or a roumi, a white. The aim of Moorish and Arabian males seems to be to impregnate as many females as possible. They master their woman, giving them a thought only when they can contribute to their vicious indulgence. Their satiety then breeds demands for novelties. In this world where women are mere pawns to be played with, and with passions unhampered by moral restraint, the Moor indulges, and does so wildly, in dissipations of the worst nature. Often he admits to incest which seems to have for him a most captivating fascination. And, a more common abnormality, Moors and Arabs are abject homosexuals. They are greatly attracted to boys, in general, and effeminate males in particular, developing for them wild erotic affection. One of the most flagrant debaucheries common among the Moors is pederasty, which is practiced by all classes as soon as they can afford the addition of pages to their harems,

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and there is probably no person elsewhere in the world, who enjoys sex-gratification with animals—dead or alive—in such a measure as do the Moors of the Maghreb. Through excessive waste of their powers, impotency often results, and it is understandable that many develop into sadists who delight in inflicting cruel and degrading acts on others.

This race has the wisdom of Allah as a foundation, for the Talmud says that nine parts of sexual passion were given to the Arabs and the remaining part was divided among all other races of the earth. True—these proud possessors of such a civilized faith as that of Islam seem to have all that is rapacious and filthy in their characters. Knowing nothing of morality, they have no strength of will. They resemble animals in their repeated yielding to impulse. And yet in no other sect is faith so paramount and so unweakened by strain of skepticism. Their prayers are openly heard, but beside them flourish all the vices.

Moorish morality, or rather lack of it, is not only founded on custom and tradition, but also springs from a complete lack of affection between individuals as we know it. For example, Moors do not love their wives in our sense of the word. The philosophical basis that dismisses a woman as a breeding animal, and a thing to satisfy men's carnal desires, forces woman to curb her own nature and respond only when her body is wanted. For as long as their wives submit to their ways Moorish men are content and kind. Their barbaric form of

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marriage contributes to this as the Moor or Arab frequently pays a large dowry to the father of the bride or to the girl herself without so much as having seen her face. With that seeming indifference which springs from his all-pervading faith in Kismet, he finds consolation in the hope that once he raises the haik that covers her face, his eyes will be filled with her beauty, and then all that remains to be done is to gratify his lust. And it is rather interesting to note that, as in the far-off island of Sumatra, when consummation has taken place on the marriage night the husband presents the wife with a wedding belt the next morning, the wearing of which is the cause for a group celebration.

Though the act of purchase completes the marriage, according to Islamic judicial belief, and though under Moslem law it is vicious and sinful for women to indulge in extramarital relationships, and though it is contrary to the tenets of the Koran, Chapter IX, which distinctly proscribes relations between people related by blood, the woman quite often becomes the property of the father first. This occurs in most cases when the girl has been given in marriage in childhood, at ten or twelve years of age, for girls mature here at an early age. Custom gives the father the *jus connubii*, and primitive customs other than the Moslem and Arab give many instances of this patriarchal prerogative. Usually the duty of defloration was assigned to a priest, or a holy man, acting merely as a substitute for the father; but going further back, we find the gigantic

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stone of Priapus Phallus, on which every young wife had to sit, and with medieval feudals the *jus primæ noctis* (seignorial right) prevailed.

In every recess of Moslem married life lurk vestiges of questions to intrigue one interested in its customs. The Moor, on catching his wife *flagrante delicto*, is supposed, by Hadith, a law established by the customs of the land, and the Kanoun (the unwritten social law), supported by Islamic rigorous tenets, to kill both the transgressor and the wife. Yet despite this enshrinement of marriages, prostitution and slavery of women are widespread. There seems to be no line of demarcation between a good and a bad woman. Many of the clandestine houses in the licensed quarter of Algiers are frequented by married women whose husbands' incomes are often insufficient for the luxurious tastes of their households. They sell their bodies with, and sometimes without, the consent of their husbands. This is not looked upon as infidelity by the defenders of the system, who have indeed a flexible conscience. And not unlike the systems that obtain in the Japanese Yoshiwaras, in the hills parents find it quite easy to provide for their daughters' dowries, to find a madame in an Algiers bawdy house who is willing to advance a certain sum for the use of the girl's body. When she has worked out her dowry she returns to the hills where she enters into honorable marriage and sets up her *ménage*. Unscrupulous, unprincipled parents simply exploit their daughters, sending them to clandestine houses.

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Allah in his wisdom (and possible alliance with the shrewd French) has decreed that it is strictly against the laws of the Koran for a man to live with any woman who is not married to him legally or who is not his recognized concubine. And so in Algiers a special quarter has been set aside where there are licensed houses and countless one-room cribs where women of all hues and tribes ply their trade. This business, debauched and commercialized as in all other parts of the world, is protected by custom and rigidly enforced laws, in which madames and procurers, politicians and authorities have a none-too-relenting finger in the luscious pie. Since there is a strong racial feeling in places where Arabs abound, and no true Arab dares to have traffic with a white man, the Arabian prostitutes are reserved for men of their own race. Since Algeria is a French colony the inmates of the licensed houses are forced to register and have medical examination. The police department's primary interest is to collect a heavy toll from all the houses, and a tax is levied on each inmate and each visitor. Once a girl has entered a licensed brothel, she finds herself shamefully exploited by the madame and the procurer. She is allowed to keep only a small percentage of her earnings, while exorbitant charges are made for her board, lodging and clothing. Her debts are used to keep control over her body, but the girls become restless and fall easy prey to offers from unlicensed keepers, and pimps for the white slave traffic.

The prostitutes are their keepers' only asset, for

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their one-room houses contain only a scraggy bed and a washstand. All girls under twenty-one are supposed to be registered, for officials openly admit that, with girls of fourteen and under practicing the trade, an effort must be made to bring them under medical control. Folly, indeed, for in the Arab quarter especially, in their one-room houses, practically on the street, native women ply an uncontrolled trade, hired for a price from their keepers. Girls from local tribes profess this trade, but many of the inmates of the one-room houses originate in the desert and the hills, and are the nomad or Bedouin women—kissed first by the desert sun. Some are of extraordinary, almost dangerous beauty, tattooed with fine crosses and other marks between their eyebrows and on their cheeks, draped in colorful cottons and shawls. But the majority of the inmates of the houses in Algiers are the famed Ouled Naïls—from the tribe of Ouled Naïls—that come from west of Biskra, in the hills. These girls of pleasure are in no way lowering their prestige by living this life. The Ouled Nail is usually in the adolescent stage, with crude but luxuriant bodily development, when she comes to sell her favors to secure her dowry. In Japan this transaction occurs generally in childhood and the Ouled Nail's Japanese sister signs a contract. But the Ouled Nail comes freely, bringing the louis d'or and sovereigns of gold adorning her neck and head, and a richly pointed bracelet—to keep those she does not want at arms' length.

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The white slave traffic in Algiers is enormous and works both ways. Arabian girls from Algiers will submit to all varieties of degradation and abuse to get abroad. By way of doctored passports they arrive in houses in Paris and Marseilles where they find the life much to their liking. On the other hand, girls of all countries, from the small Italian islands and Sicily in particular, are brought by way of sham marriages and doctored birth and marriage certificates and fake passports, not only to the colonies in Tripoli where women-folk for the Italian soldiery are extremely scarce, but also to Tunis and Algiers.

These pages may stand as a summary of the monstrously corrupt system and the immense human tragedy that festers in the Barbary States. While there has been some agitation in one form or another on the part of the French, whose foster children they are and who have promised equality to women by lifting them in theory out of the class of the slave, little has been accomplished.

Well, my notebook has said not to overlook La Belle Fatma in the Rue Barbarousse and to see, particularly, the sights in the Rue Sidi Ramdam.

It was still early in the evening. I heard the sing-songs of the newspaper boys with the French journals from Marseilles and Paris, and parts beyond, which had arrived this very day. I beheld men of all hues in evening jackets, smoking cigarettes and playing cards,

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women in soft and lustrous flimsy dresses, while an orchestra, made up of all sorts of instruments, lilted soft tunes, but later changed to an unfamiliar medley. An intoxicating atmosphere. Electric cars scurrying and clanging. Postcard sellers. And touts with obscene photographs bleating their nasal song. These so-called guides make our life miserable. They are the very essence of nuisance, impudence and impertinence. One in particular—a good-looking tout who, so rumor went, was taken by many sensation-seeking English and American women as their personal guide into the desert—was on hand, and he gave us this information in the strictest confidence, using it as his recommendation.

A stately native clad in white burnoose that hung to his slippered feet, and a white turban with haïk thrown over it, entered this gay, kaleidoscopic conglomerate. His face was in repose and thought and his half-open eyes gazed into space.

A bit of the Parisian boulevard has been transplanted here, in this city of French Northern Africa.

A few tables away from me an American girl talked in a raucous voice of the lure of the East and of Harun-al-Rashid as if she were extolling some idol of the movies.

Growing somewhat bored with the doings all around me and gazing at the whitewashed buildings that climb up the slopes to the Citadel, I was ready to call the garçon for the bill when I was attracted by the antics of an Algerian houri.

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On my previous visit, to Algiers I had become acquainted with the Arab quarter of that city and its roving women, with the white veil hiding the lower part of the face and showing only the coal-black, lustrous eyes and long eyelashes penciled with kohl, with henna-tinted fingernails, slithering along in heelless boots. However, the majority of Algerian and Moroccan houris that I had seen had done away with the haïk with which each true Islamite or Mussulman, in olden days, was wont to cover her face. This woman wore not only a veil but a cape of white silk, making a rather elegant appearance, silk stockings, and shoes—the latter the only concession she had been willing to make to modern colonial life. Nearby sat a French officer—tanned, blue-eyed, and with a mustache studiously waxed, which he did not cease to finger daintily. He was talkative, as Frenchmen usually are. He turned to me, apparently aware of my interest in the woman.

"Who is she," I asked him, "and why the veil?" to which he replied, very eloquently: "Ah, the veiling of this woman, monsieur! Some of these ladies realize still that nothing makes a thing so interesting as its mysteriousness. She is aware that the veil provides her with the best artifice for seduction. So the more of her body she hides, monsieur, the greater her charms, and the greater become man's desires. Realizing, then, the power she wields with her haïk, she utilizes it very craftily. Perceiving that she is being followed, she will slow up her movements, and then, turning around sud-

denly, she will drop her veil, just long enough for a man to become aware of her good looks and then bring it rapidly, in feigned alarm, back to her face; then, knowing that she is being followed, she will lead him to a hotel, where, in the lobby she will discuss with him the terms. When all is arranged, they will repair to the room which is readily provided.

"These veiled prostitutes, known in our city by the name of prostitutes de luxe, do a well-paying business. And, monsieur, they are usually free of disease. And if monsieur desires (monsieur is perhaps a stranger in town?) I could easily show you some of the sights for which our city is fairly well renowned, and where few tourists ever come. That is, monsieur, if I do not intrude."

"Awfully nice of you, monsieur; that would suit me fine, provided, of course, it won't be taking up too much of your time. I have, as a matter of fact, some addresses given me by friends."

The Frenchman laughed genially, as he again stroked his mustache, and replied, "I am at your service, monsieur!"

We left the café and we walked rapidly through the quarter around the harbor that is distinctly French. Spacious, with its wide boulevards, and gay-looking, luxurious Parisian shops. And no end of open-air cafes—and the honk-honk of motor cars and the noises of electric cars as they flitted by. It seemed to me that from Paris with its boulevards and northern clime to

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Barbary with its mimosa and brilliant sunshine was but a short journey.

We passed a café, Moorish to the core. From a partly open doorway streamed a ray of light. Inside, a throng of Arabs, all in gandoura and burnoose, and smoking long nargilehs, were gazing in eager anticipation toward the rear of the room where a half-naked houri was doing a *danse du ventre*.

Soon the scenery became drab and the streets quite dreary. We had reached the Oriental old town, as we climbed up steep hillsides to the Kasbah, or fortress—as ancient, in fact, and Oriental as Bagdad. Of streets there were no more; they were mere precipitous passages, burrowing in the dust and the dirt beneath the dwellings. No vehicle, nor horse, nor mule could be used in these passageways. Donkeys, the only beasts of burden, here climbed nimbly and philosophically up the cobbled steps. Narrow streaks of sky managed, at times, to peer through. Where one passageway began, a donkey stood patiently, on three feet, awaiting its master; the lower part of the fourth foot was tied by a rope to the upper, preventing its straying.

In a little square where all day the Arabian sun had been pouring its rays with scorching virulence on the white flat-roofed houses, we came to a halt. In little holes in the walls were numerous shops. And here were men who sold fruits, stuffed and dried. The stalls were manned by Moabites, the orthodox Mohammedans of the far south. Farther up I noted the slim and quick

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Kabyles, the industrious warriors of the Berber tribe for whom the Arabs nourish an ancient hatred, and dark-faced negroes strutting, as they might do in much the same fashion in the night clubs of New York's Harlem, laughing and showing their white teeth.

In one little hole that was hewn, as it were, in a wall was a coppersmith, hammering his pans; next door was a stall of fruit. And a shaft of light, from God knows where, suffused all the fruit with a glow worthy of an artist's brush. There were black olives, and vivid red capsicum and stacks of eggplants, and purple and yellow grapes.

Swarthy Arabs, fleshy-lipped and lusty-eyed, came with easy swing down the streets of steps, their long white robes and burnouses hanging gracefully from their shoulders. They were dignified looking and insolent, and sported that aristocratic hoist of the chin with true hauteur. They kept spitting to their left, since their white angels, or whatever they might be, hovered around on that side. This is a curious thing about these Arabs—whether sheik, merchant or beggar—their dignity. In fact one has the impression that beggar and patrician are patterned of the same stuff. Getting excited or hurrying they know nothing about; they remain always in that attitude of *laissez faire* of their fate. Away beyond we could hear the imam as he chanted the call to prayer—"Allah is Allah; there is but one God and Mahomet is his Prophet. Come to prayer, come and adore." This prayer sounded now

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from dozens of minarets that pierced the sky all around.

And beneath it, from the dark shadows of the crooked passageways, rose mixed odors—foul scents, aromatic scents, offensive and delicious scents. . . .

We had reached the heart of the Arabic quarter, miserable as hell. The Village Nègre, with its low evil-smelling dwellings, with its agglomerate of beggars, pariahs, flotsam and dregs of humanity, and scavengers like carrion birds.

And so we meandered through extremely crooked streets, peering into many of the shops along the way. We stopped, and entered the doorway of a small café, where a flickering light of an oil lamp threw a macabre glow over a row of benches where Arabs were sitting, spellbound, as they watched girls in semi-party dresses dancing slowly up and down the center. The raïta squealed and the derbouka and tom-tom beat in regular cadence as the dance proceeded.

It was refined—if there is such a thing as a refined danse du ventre—mild muscular distortion of the abdomen. My friend conversed jovially with an Arab, who nodded a reply and passed word to one of the girls. She was beautiful—not over fifteen—with lovely limpid eyes and small nose and teeth as pearly as any I've seen. And she was wilder in her movements than the others. My friend seemed to know her, for she nodded a few times, uttered a word and went on with her dancing.

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Two of the women had thick ankles, and instead of wearing the attractive Arab slippers with which the *Arabian Nights* stories have made us familiar, they wore cheap French shoes and had their fat legs encased in cotton or woolen stockings.

I sat myself down near one of the Arab girls—a Berber—in a gaudy jacket of brocaded silk. I gave her a franc, unable otherwise to enter into conversation with her. It was my companion who asked her the questions I should have liked to ask. She had come from Biskra, the city of the sun, the queen of the desert, and the fairest of all the oases of the Sahara, where she had done duty in its street of the Ouled Nails.

I looked around. An elderly Berber, or Moslem he might have been, ogled me with almost beastly ferocity. Thinking of the strange deeds that had been done in that street, in the Rue Sidi Ramdam—since no greater street of bandits and cutthroats ever existed—I removed my small hulk to another bench, while the Moslem, an expression of ferocity on his face, watched my every move with his big sullen and sombre eyes.

My friend smiled and after he had given an order to the girls, in the place, he whispered a word in Arabic that seemed to make an impression on the swarthy native, for he moved away. The heat had by now become stifling and the atmosphere almost fetid. But no one seemed to care. The place itself was crowded and it throbbed with intense excitement.

"Wait and see," my French comrade said to me.

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"And hang on to your wallet, whatever you do; things are beginning to stir a bit," he whispered, as the half-naked women who had occupied the center of the place began to strum guitars and play the violas. One woman, seated on a dais, played a shrill trumpet, the *ketja*, producing a catlike sound. Two others beat the *derbouka*, which looked like a bottle, or rather a large flower vase with round body and long neck, over the wider end of which a piece of parchment had been tightly drawn. It was a terrifying—at times, monotonous—deep sound, whose beauty escaped me. Probably, with my ears attuned to classical pieces, the real essence of this intensive Eastern music failed to strike the right chord.

Naked dancers—three negresses and a negro—now appeared on the small dais and started their dances. Truly comical were their motions. Their tongues lolled and their eyes rolled in one contortion after another. One woman, a huge six-foot wench, split forward on the floor, her doglike head revolving on her sinuous neck. And as she lifted herself, she wriggled her pelvis so that she was in full view of the spectators, who thundered applause while they clamored for more. Another of the negresses, with thick lips and compelling mouth—a sensuous creature, looked like a tigress. The third—a favorite with the crowd apparently—had heavy breasts and well-shaped legs that displayed agility. Her breasts joggled up and down like water bags on a mule.

The dancing now became more intense and the

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audience was led to a transport of enthusiasm. They stamped their feet as the music became wilder, hilariously joining in the refrain and sucking in every motion of the colored houris with almost cataleptic interest, aggravated, I suspected, by the influence of hashish, to which so many of the natives are addicted.

The burly black was now almost on top of the dancing negresses. Many of the Arabs in the audience could hardly restrain themselves, after this violent, sensuous display. Their emotions were stirred to the heights of passion reached by the entertainers. Vicious hands were grappling with the colored women and, inspired by the call tune of the jungle drum, idolatrous and insurgent, the derbouka and the flute, the dance became a jungle orgy.

Paper money began to fly from the enrapt audience. One lusty negress licked one up from the floor, while another grappled with a male negro in the dust.

Slowly we succumbed to the surroundings and my eyes drooped somewhat, to the monotonous, yet wild cadences of the jungle music. When the negresses had finished their performance, they flashed broad smiles at the audience and fled from the dais.

"Don't they dance well?" my companion asked. "I've never seen this dance better done, and I've lived here six years." He conversed in fluent Arabic with a young Arab, swathed in robes of immaculate whiteness, whose white-stockinged feet were tucked away under him. A neat beard and mustache—both intensely black

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—set off the paleness of his skin. On his head was a white turban, with a fez, like a slash of blood, showing beneath. His fine hands were clasped in his lap. He spoke in sharp, guttural tones and his imperious bearing, his occasional fierce look, produced a commanding effect. My companion turned to me and introduced us. He was Mustapha Abdul Hamid, a trader from a place north of Tangier who had come to Algiers on his way to Morocco, to replenish his harem. The Arab talked very incisively, so that I was able to understand a few words. It was evident that something was being arranged. He was going to escort us to a place where, so he said, La Belle Fatma would be dancing—where we could feast our eyes on a sight rarely seen by roumis, the white men.

We filed out into the street. A few minutes' walk and we came to a market place. It was twilight. Faintly we could hear the strumming of a gimbri. A low voice chanted a monotonous song. Out of the dark of an alley came two white-robed figures, veiled to the dark eyes, who, with furtive, lingering, backward glances, darted into a carved marble portal.

"Msa el khir (Good evening)," said our Arabian friend. "Aleikum es salaam (God be with you)," came the answer, almost in a whisper.

"You'd better watch your hat, monsieur," said my companion.

"My hat?" I queried.

"Yes, your hat; you may suddenly find yourself with-

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out one, and when chasing it through these labyrinthine streets, it may land you among a horde of cutthroats the like of which you have never seen."

I looked around and was amazed at the lack of space between the houses. And I became aware that darkness would make an easy accomplice of many scoundrels in such surroundings.

Veiled women hastily made their way through these narrow alleyways. Occasionally we would hear a cry, that was dulled by a thud, speaking volumes for the danger that lurked here for men and women who went about unescorted.

We continued to chat as we strolled.

"This is the Rue Barbarousse," the dignified Arab said.

I almost expected to meet, face to face, the pirate of that name, while the very mention of it brought on visions of galleys, kidnappings, and razzias, and of cities burned to the ground. But no, all I beheld was a heterogeneous mob from all ports of the Mediterranean—Moors, Jews, Italians, Maltese, Sardinians, Frenchmen, Hollanders—and even Japanese and Annamites, swarming the narrow streets. Noises became harsher, a roar of music. A light showed here and there. And slowly we emerged from the night shadows. An occasional black donkey, kicking with its front feet all the filthy dogs that came within its reach, clomped down the sloping streets.

By a mosque, where from its tall minaret the muez-

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zjn would chant his call to prayer—right under the very nose of the church, so to speak, were rows of tall dwellings, housing dames de joie, of many a nationality and hue. In front of the open doors were Arab women wearing colored kerchiefs around their necks, gaudy jackets of brocaded silks, and baggy trousers. We passed a house in front of which a Berber girl importuned. Our Arabian companion spat at her, with ancient hatred. This Berber girl was arrayed in all colors of the rainbow. There were the omnipresent Ouled Nails—who had come all the way from the Ksar of Boghari. In addition, there were bright-eyed Jewesses from Oran and Constantine and a great number of negresses from desert oases, thick-lipped and hairy and with their heavy breasts sticking out from under their short jackets. And then there were white women too—French and Italian and Spanish—all in an atmosphere of barbaric music, broken by shrill voices and high-pitched laughter.

Patriarchal, draped Arabs with turban and cane, emerged from the intense shadow of a dark, gabled doorway. A tout, having followed in our wake for quite some way—a man with no face at all, a sort of flattened expanse of cross-seamed skin, a slanting gash for a mouth and two fiery eyeholes, offered us obscene pictures, which we declined. Before one of the places we came to a halt.

An ugly-looking Arab opened the door of a low house and allowed us to peek in. A half-naked houri,

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on a dais, was moving her sensuous body into all sorts of contortions. Then, when the Arab had decided we had seen enough, since no money had passed hands, he invited us to come in, get to business and close the door behind us.

"Please you come in, gentlemen," he said, in French. "She knows all ze tricks you American men so like."

We left the gaudily dressed Arabian barker, whom we had thanked for his invitation, and he bellowed after us his glad tidings of amour as he promised to match any pattern of sensation that one might crave. And so we continued until our Arabian friend spoke again.

"Voilà," he said. We had reached the bottom of a horrible blind alley. Dead bodies of animals, buried in slime, were slowly putrefying. Vapors, too heavy to rise, hovered over the ground, corroding the walls, the bases of which were being rotted away by the penetrating moisture. They crumbled, bit by bit, in viscous masses. This part of the Arab town is almost impossible to describe—with its passages of communication burrowing themselves beneath the dwellings. Rabbit warren is the only simile. No vehicle could penetrate this labyrinth. Only diminutive donkeys passed in single file. Narrow streaks of light from the sky occasionally filtered through a slit in this hive.

The houses, if they could be called such, were weird in their mysteriousness. The walls were void of any decoration. Narrow, slitlike loopholes were the only

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indication that people dwelt there; just like the Arabian women, the houses were veiled and secretive.

Thus we walked on for a few minutes through a world of smells and sounds and creeps and shudders, the touch and the feel of it evoking for a moment the shadows of the past—a spell of terror and utter mystery. Not a sound, not a living being; nothing—nothing but the heavy thud of our footsteps on the stone and slime. Nothing but the slow, silent, eternal work of this putrefaction.

Mustapha Abdul Hamid hesitated a moment, and made us stop too. He seemed undecided whether to go on. Cold as of a dungeon struck us with a chill. We felt our hearts failing us, in the midst of these abominations. Yet . . . he gave a grunt and on we went.

A door opened now. A surprisingly old, faded and worn door that we had a hard time distinguishing from the wall. A white figure enveloped in a haïk stepped out and skirted the wall, gliding away noiselessly—almost like a specter, its eyes fixed as if absorbed in a dream, its face emaciated, its hands like those of a skeleton. This walking corpse grazed me on its way, and vanished into the dark of the alleyway.

I whispered, "What a place for a murder!"

"Right you are, mon ami; that is exactly what happens here every day of the week, monsieur," our Arabian guide gurgled, and he grinned. "He is one of the customers of the place we are now going to."

* We stopped again. Mustapha continued alone for

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a few steps in front. He entered the eerie place through the door the phantom had just left.

"This fellow seems quite at ease," thought I.

"Messieurs, come along," he beckoned us to follow.

We had to stoop in order to get through the doorway, and found ourselves in a narrow passage—damp and gloomy—where a grayish light from some unknown source was filtering through. And it was here I saw one sight that I shall not soon forget. Just as we entered what seemed to be a large room, we beheld, in a flash in the semidarkness as we strutted through, the outline of a stark-naked woman—a Nubian she was—with sallow skin and a haggard, wasted body, and she had an idiotic smile upon her face.

The faint red gleam of a lamp illuminated the center of the room but left the other parts in a sort of opaque shade. At the farther end, in an alcove, stood a stove, on which a pot of coffee was simmering. Colored mats were hung along the walls and similar coverings were spread on the earthen floor, while dimly burning lanterns were suspended from the vaulted ceiling.

Mustapha was an habitu  , that was plain to see. He spoke a few words in guttural Arabic with several natives who gargled out a reply.

In the shadow of an alcove—one of the many we could see, now that our eyes had become accustomed to the light—were two male Arabs lying on a divan. They were homosexuals, and in their moments of ab-

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normal passion they seemed totally oblivious of their surroundings. We could hear the quickened breathing of these prostrate beings, in complete abandonment.

In the shadow of another corner was a group of musicians—about eight in number. Occasional gleams of light flashed from their bestial faces and their contortions and music beguiled the senses of the natives strewn about. An ebony-colored wench with massive eyebrows was held in a fierce embrace by a black bull of a man with whom she was, at the moment, dancing. Both were stark naked. As the tempo of the music increased their bodies came closer and closer, keeping perfect rhythm with their shoulders, knees and hips. They shook and contorted convulsively to the weird and passionate music, until finally they sank to their knees in utter exhaustion. A ray of light from the lamp above swept over their perspiring, heavy-breathing bodies. It revealed their worn faces and rolling eyes. They seemed almost unreal—freaks come to life from a dreadful nightmare. . . .

Arabs were lying about in easy repose, or sitting and squatting as they smoked their nargilehs filled with hashish, their slippers ranged in a circle around them. They applauded the two ebony dancers and threw them coins. The bluish vapor of their pipes, with strong, pungent odor, gathered in dense clouds beneath the ceiling.

We took our seats on a divan, watching with curiosity the group of smokers, and a number of half-nude

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Arabian and Nubian girls. A burly negro waited upon us, bringing us our coffee and filling the pipes.

An old grizzled Arab rolled up in wool and muslin was lying behind me on a divan, his face a greenish waxen tinge. His hollow eyes! His dull look had a fixed and icy expression and the pupil of his left eye was large and dilated. A thin foam oozed from his half-parted lips, which moved in spasms. He stroked, in his daze, a young, well-built Arab lying at his side. The eyes of this delicate and pallid youth glared like carbuncles, and his body swayed to and fro with a nervous rapid movement, nestling up to the old man with undulations like those of a cat. Just as the negro pair finished their dance, a light flush appeared on the old Arab's cheeks, and with a piercing cry he threw himself back, his head striking the wall with a thud.

Two Arabs, who had been looking on with greedy eyes, jumped to their feet, and lifting him from the divan, laid him in a corner of the room, where they wiped his lips and bathed his temples, throwing a covering over his limp body.

Mustapha slowly removed his haïk, his burnoose, kaftan, his fez and his slippers, and after taking a long draft of raki—indifferent as only a Moslem can be, he again spoke a few words in loud, guttural tones, and reclined.

Presently a hideous man, with bloated face and bloodshot eyes, detached himself from a Nubian wench and started up as suddenly as if impelled by a spring.

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With his arms pressed to his sides, head thrust forward, his mouth wide open, revealing a set of gleaming white teeth, he began a rude, savage dance, beating the ground with his naked feet and marking time with his heels. At the sight of him the orchestra emphasized the melody and played in quicker time—at first it was an eternally repeated motif, a slow rhythm and monotonous, that changed to a long, sharp, harrowing cry, grating on me at first as something abnormal, monstrous and totally incomprehensible. But gradually my ear became inured to the slow measured echo, the wails and the rapping.

Then the derbouka became a heavy rumble, the gimbri more harrowing, and with viols lamenting, the tall creature was stimulated to an even more vicious and infernal dance. He contorted his features furiously. Then he paused for a moment—just for one second he moved not a single muscle—and his limbs were absolutely rigid. Not a sigh escaped his closed lips nor did a breath come from his swollen chest. He seemed suddenly turned into a statue. The music struck up a softer, calmer strain and he started to move once more. He pressed his legs tightly together, while the upper portion of his body remained still. And thus he swayed his hips with lascivious oscillations. The music once more accelerated the pace and tempo. The movement of his hips changed to a strong trepidation of the lower limbs. The expression on his perspiring face was viciously cruel. His throat quivered with a hoarse

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rattle, and for another moment he stood still. He made a true animal picture—hunting for prey. And all at once he rushed with a yell upon a Nubian girl, and the two rolled to the ground in a horrible embrace. This provoked bursts of applause, while guttural voices rose from the many Arabs and echoed against the walls.

Monsieur le capitaine, smiling discreetly, in true French bonhomie, spoke to me in a low voice: "Shall we leave now, monsieur?"

I nodded. I was ready to go.

He touched our friend Mustapha, smiling assuringly at him in the gloom. Mustapha was drawing in some hashish through his languid mouth. He suggested we stay for a few minutes more.

We withdrew to a corner for a moment where we had coffee and got better acquainted. After some small talk, the way was paved for the more important information I was seeking about slaves. For had not monsieur said that Mustapha was buying slaves?

"Mustapha," I remarked, "you are well acquainted with Algiers. It's a bit of luck to have come across you."

"Yes, monsieur," he replied, "I do know Algiers quite well. In fact, I have been coming down here for years. I used to travel much to Tangier, where in the past I was engaged in the business of buying and selling slaves—an occupation which took me often to Morocco. The constant change in administration and of native officials in Tangier took me, at various times,

farther southward to Marrakesh, where good slaves were to be had. Such affairs had then to be conducted on the quiet."

His eyes twinkled. "You are no stranger, monsieur, I observe, to our affairs. Although"—and he hesitated and glanced at the Frenchman for a reassuring sign—"I suppose you are interested in learning what so many others before you have come to learn about Marrakesh."

"Exactly, Mustapha, as my friend here knows. Tell me more about that trade. Of course, I've heard about it, but I have never seen anything of it."

"That question I shall be most pleased to answer, monsieur." He spoke with the zest of a hunter on the trail.

From a pocket in his burnoose he produced a scrap of paper and pushed it toward me with some excitement. It contained the Arabian name of a *hourî*, perhaps, or some slave driver whose name meant much to him.

"Here," he said, "is the name of a man in a souk of the old slave market in Marrakesh—the same spot, you know, where in the days of the Barbary corsairs Christian captives were put up for auction."

"Indeed, I know that quite well, monsieur," my French captain chimed in. "Many a Circassian beauty has looked desperately around the pillars of the public forum, monsieur, where her charms were being displayed."

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"It was good, monsieur," the Arab sighed. "Alas, these days are past. We have to move with greater circumspection if we want to buy slaves now. On the very spots where we deal now in quiet, they used to operate these markets with all vim and vigor in Marrakesh. And"—he whispered lest someone near might overhear—"they still exist in very remote parts, where the vigilance is not so rigid."

"The market used to be open and very hot—on bare ground. Now they have built up the place."

"Yes, sir, through the narrow, then unpaved streets, wealthy Moorish gentlemen would arrive in crowds—on mules and on horses, the news having spread from far and near that the harem of a rich Moor would be disposed of."

"Then the auctioneer would lift up his voice and recite the glory of the Prophet, thanking Allah, and then he would call on the patron saint of Marrakesh, Sidi-bel-Abbès, to bless the market; whereupon the devout would bend down and pray. . . .

"Men with stately steps would move with dignity among the slaves. And then the slaves would be led into the open, placed in line by the auctioneers and marched round and round the crowds of buyers."

"Young women, unveiled . . . young girls, who had not yet tasted the bitter fruit of harem duty . . . only four or five years old, for whom the bidding was always brisk. When these slave girls were six years old, they were already sold as companions; when twelve they

would do for harem duty; while sixty dollars would be the average price paid.

"Yes," sighed my friend, "the roumis have made these markets extremely difficult and the slave markets now have dropped to small proportions . . . they are no more. The slaves were sold with a guarantee and if they did not come up to the qualification they could be returned. There used to be some very spirited bidding for attractive women and well-breasted, well-proportioned young girls. Boy slaves are sold even to this very day, sir." (I knew, for these boys are sold to Moors who raise them to do homosexual duties. They fetch as high as a hundred dollars a piece.)

"Older people were less in demand, as they were the fodder that nobody really wanted. When a girl had found a buyer, she was turned round and round and pushed forward for closer inspection. There were women of all kinds, old and brazen, merry and indifferent, shuffling in gait, melancholy and pitiful. The slave dealers were primarily interested in heavy-built, heavy-breasted slaves, since they were to raise as many children as their health would permit, so that they in turn could raise children again to be sold to the highest bidder."

The Arab paused for a moment as he took a long suck at his nargileh, while we sipped our coffee from the tiny cups—a coffee that was thick and fragrant and sweet.

I was thinking of Flaubert's great epic of the senses,

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in which Salammô ascends to the roof terrace where perfumed receptacles filled with cinnamon and myrrh were tended by slaves. And of Flaubert's morbid description of the slaves, a gruesome description of barbarians and their mongrel deeds, of their mutilations and deformities, their bestial vices, their savage ferocity. And I thought that it was not at all remarkable that this Moslem would speak of slaves as he would speak of a change in the weather. "I am at the mercy of God and as God wills" was his creed. To him, murder and adultery and rape are merely small sins for which his God is merciful and forgiving. "Men are after all the creatures of destiny," thus it is decreed.

"It is a shame, monsieur," my friend continued, "for a people that have never been conquered to be doing such things in secret. Because of French meddling in the coastal towns, slave markets are no longer held. Slaves are sold secretly and are carried in the darkness from house to house." He spat in contempt.

"Why, monsieur, we do treat our slaves very kindly. After all, it was well that there were such markets. For there was hunger in many houses, and it was indeed hard for men to find food. But slaves were well fed even in times of famine and war. Soldiers and free men would die. But slaves were free and did not have to fight, while their women lived in true comfort. Why then, monsieur, did the Nazarene liberate the slave? Why did the Nazarene prohibit this trade? Has not

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the Prophet spoken the following words: 'He who behaveth ill against a slave shall not gain admission to Paradise. . . . As to your slaves, feed them such food as you do eat yourselves. As to clothes, clothe them with the same stuff you wear. And if then they show disobedience, sell them; for they are the servants of Allah and are not to be tormented.' You will agree with me, monsieur, that no wiser words were ever uttered than those of Mahomet, our Prophet.

"Non, monsieur," he said, as he spat again, upon a drunk lying nearby, "the ways of the foreigners are cruel. Allah is wise in his wisdom, and Mahomet is his Prophet. . . ."

He stared for a moment into space. Then his face lit up as he began to watch the proceedings again.

We rose and bade him good-bye. He was courteous and came with us to the door. I would see him again.

"Msa el khir," said our Arabian friend.

"Aleikum es salaam," we replied, as we filed out into the gloomy street.

We were to have dinner in the house of an Arab, whose harem my Moslem friend replenished with fodder. Hence he had a standing invitation, as no man is more welcome in an Arab household than the man who is concerned with selling the host his concubines.

He called for me at my hotel in Mustapha Supérieure, the orchard suburb of Algiers, by the steep hill-

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side to the south. I had basked in the sun, caressed by whiffs of a mild sirocco, faintly suggestive of the snow-capped peaks of the Atlas Mountains to the south.

It was becoming warmer and sultry. Above gathered heavy clouds laden with rain.

Suddenly on the air a shrill, long-drawn cry soared over the town and dominated all other sounds. The muezzin had mounted the balcony of the minaret of a great mosque. He turned toward the Kaaba, as he hoisted a white flag and proclaimed the faith of Islam, uttering the prayer that simultaneously is given by all true believers throughout the world.

There is no God but God, and Mahomet is his Prophet. Other flags began to float on minarets all around. The muezzin would appear and a deep silence would fall on all. The kneeling multitudes, facing east, repeated the prayer, whose last words were borne away on the sirocco. A final, slow, and plaintive note, profoundly sad: "God is Great."

I was taken through dimly lighted streets of the Arab quarter. It was market day and crowds in incessant bustle filled the market square. Files of camels, roaring fearfully, strode along, their stupid heads towering high above the people. Their long bare necks undulated with snakelike movements. Flocks of black goats, with red spots and sharply curved noses, chewed their cud. Dense throngs of Arabs in white burnouses, Jews in blue robes and black skullcaps, peasants from the Gharbieh, wrapped like Romans in the folds of

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their rough woolen haïks, strode to and fro. Here an old negroid woman, in rags, with her hair plaited with fine leather thongs and shells, was beating cymbals. There magnificent negresses, tall, supple and erect, were carrying on their heads small round flat loaves as they held between their teeth a corner slip of their haïk.

In one corner of the market could be seen some fakirs, moving their audiences to bursts of enthusiasm. They were thrusting needles through their tongues and piercing their bellies with pointed daggers. . . .

Arabs with turban and cane, with fire and contempt in their sullen eyes, sat in front of the Moorish coffee-houses playing chess and checkers.

And so we sauntered along until we reached the Rue des Maugrebins, where our Arabian host was waiting for us. We entered his house through a patio, with a graceful marble fountain in the center, palms all around. The true front was on the inside. Here was the central court built around a fountain, trickling dreamily in a somber surrounding. Double rows of arches and parapets of delicate and intricate architecture blended so well with gay walls and their colored tiles. All adding color to the domestic life.

An ugly, thick-lipped negress from Timbuktu, raised the curtain and we entered what appeared to be a large room. And here was the Arab, our host, dressed opulently. His face was dark skinned, highly intelligent.

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The French had allowed him to keep his harem—four wives, the lawful number, and as many concubines as his gay heart desired and his purse allowed. It was my companion's duty to keep the man's harem replenished with beautiful women.

Dinner was served. Our host, according to a strange custom of the land, was not seated with us. We took our seats on cushions while servants carried in low tables, on which they placed earthenware bowls. What surprised me at once was the lack of forks and knives. Naturally, we were to eat with our fingers.

At first we had mutton, with saffron and marjoram, swimming in a bath of grease. Since this was my début to a true Moorish dinner, I did well by watching my companion.

It appeared I was allowed to eat only with the thumb and first two fingers of the right hand. Besides, I had to lick my fingers after each dish.

Our amiable host, who was sitting on the side lines, so to speak, watched our every move with enjoyment. He clapped his hands every time we had labored through a new dish and to show he was a good sport he did most of the belching. When the servants brought in the next course, he submitted it to a thorough inspection. For it was the kouskous. Now, kouskous in this particular instance was made of raisins, the inevitable mutton and hard-boiled eggs. Kouskous seemed to be the *pièce de résistance* for which the rest of the Arab's family had patiently waited, for they joined us

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in the eating of this repast and like soldiers good and true they plunged their hands into the bowl in a free-for-all. They deftly rolled the mixture into a ball, just large enough to lift to their mouths. Belching was an open expression of satisfaction and enjoyment.

And then the slaves brought in tangerines and tea, flavored and perfumed with large sprigs of fresh mint. And girls carried in small basins of water, soap and towels, while others brought on the incense.

Our Arab host joined us in the tea drinking ceremony, as a sign of respect. He also took part in the conversation, which at times was urbane and jolly. We then adjourned to the reception room at one end of the fountained court, and slaves brought us cigarettes and nargilehs.

Our host, it seemed, was at home equally in Paris, London and New York. I was moved to question this man with the lusty lips, the tall forehead and brilliant eyes. He had traveled extensively and his life in Algeria and the Moghreb had not in the least dulled his interest in the rest of the globe. He seemed to be interested in all sorts of peoples, and women in particular, and while he, like all Arabs, was a lover of freedom, in women he deplored that freedom of action that he coveted so much for himself.

The talk drifted to America, since he had traveled there and had had time to study its people. As he spoke, his face changed expression and became almost severe.

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"I could never understand the strange anomalies of the conduct of your people. We Moslems are masters and never afraid of our women. You Americans are actually terrorized by a handful of fluff. That chivalry that seems to characterize your whole life is to my mind nothing but fear. It is strange, dear sir, for I do admire your American men very much. I have met many of your countrymen. Why, monsieur, I traveled many leagues in my younger days, but nowhere have I seen a place where women are placed on such a pedestal as in New York. And where men have so little to say.

"Ce sont des phénomènes, les Américains, monsieur. Yes, that is the word, sir, phenomena.

"Your American girls, monsieur. They are chic, decidedly pretty and very spirited. They are provocative but they are without real passion, though they crave sensation.

"And that is my impression, my dear sir, of your American people, whom otherwise I greatly respect and admire."

Refreshments were served again and we smoked on in silence. The rich fragrance of the smoke from our nargilehs filled the room.

We finally took our leave, for we had work to do. A visit to a French madame. Our amiable host insisted that he accompany us through the alley to the street and here he bade us farewell, profuse in his characteristic use of truly Oriental salutations.

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In the Rue Barbarousse, in the highly exclusive maison of Madame LaFleur, I really learned a lot about Algiers' licensed trade. Madame LaFleur was a character to suit a Balzac or a Flaubert. A buxom, light-haired, horse-faced woman of considerable intelligence.

It was a treat to sit down and listen to this French-woman who came from Marseilles, as she spoke with that vivacity so peculiar to the French. She had been quite successful since she had come here. She operated three bagnios with thirty-six women, all white, and had just finished a three-year sentence in jail.

Seated upon a brocade sofa, over an apéritif, she summoned forth reminiscences of her colorful life.

She was, so I had heard, a woman as respectable as any who attended the meetings of the Savior Society. Whether she was, or not, did not interest me at the time. What interested me most was the intimate story of a little indiscretion that she told, in an unguarded moment, with tears in her eyes.

A commercial traveler, in a hotel where she was the chambermaid, had left her bed one morning with plenty of promises but months slipped by and she found herself with child.

The wife of the proprietor of the hotel, a very respectable woman, had always faint suspicions that her amorous husband left her bed at night, to spend a few hours with the buxom maid. And as the maid grew

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more buxom the mistress' suspicions grew stronger, and she decided to discharge her.

A girl baby was born; the infant was placed in an orphanage while the mother, heart-broken, decided to go to Algiers. There she became a barmaid. She worked hard and was frugal and saved enough to open a brothel for herself.

Twenty-one years ago all this had happened. The board and education of her little girl she had faithfully paid for.

A little over three years ago she had been in need of three girls and instructed her procurer to bring them with him the next trip across. And one sunny afternoon, just as she was serving drinks to two dusty and thirsty Zouaves, the door opened and all four walked in. But one day a letter that she had sent to the orphanage with her yearly remittance was acknowledged with the message that her daughter had left the place, in company with a man, it was rumored, and had gone to Algiers. This aroused her suspicions and she decided to interrogate the procurer. He said it was true. So she pledged him to secrecy.

Then followed a series of demands for money on the part of the procurer. He threatened to disclose the truth to her daughter if she did not pay. In desperation madame pulled a revolver and killed the man on the spot. She was taken into custody and since she refused to talk and tell her story to the court, she was sentenced to three years in prison. And her daughter . . . well,

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if you go the Rue Dumarsais in Marseilles' Cannèbière, you will find her. Madame arranged in the only way she knew to send her home.

Madame LaFleur's establishment was large. It was attractively fitted out in a riot of colors, drenched in odors of intoxicating and costly perfumes, while its occupants were carmined and heavily painted French, Spanish, Greek and Italian women.

"Ah, oui, le Quartier," she said. "Ah, yes, the Traffic of Algiers.

"Well, monsieur, what shall I tell you? I suppose you have seen the native quarter.

"First of all the authorities. Well, monsieur, they are very kind and so obliging. They are like a father to me. They aid me because they realize so well that my houses are as necessary to the colonials as their verre du vin. So there is hardly any risk, provided, of course, I live up to the regulations. That does not mean that we are entirely free of interference. Oh, non, monsieur. Every girl brings her own responsibility. Until she is worked in and is in the swing, she needs a great deal of watching. If the girl is smart, she can make a great deal of money. Yet we do not work the girls to death. There is a sort of Union of Prostitutes, and under the rules they get one day off every week, except naturally on Saturday or Sunday, as you can well understand.

"All the girls are registered and are examined by the doctor every week. No girl under twenty-one is

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allowed in my place. Yet in all confidence I should tell you that I have two girls below that age. When the procurer showed me the papers, they were supposed to be twenty-eight years old. And since I have paid my good money for them I cannot afford to let them go.

"All the girls have to have a red card, to show that they have been examined and registered. If the authorities happen to find a girl below age, who has been masquerading on a red card, she is taken to the police station and is given a green card, which shows that she is under age, while it also records the dates on which she has been examined by the clinic for venereal disease.

"The girls I have are satisfied here, will go wherever I send them. They often like a change and, since I have a number of houses including one in Marseilles, I send them wherever there is the greatest demand for them.

"The Arab girls are simply crazy to get over seas and You see, they have no chance here to get the men's trade, so they must get to France. The man who supplies me with girls handles much of that sex trade and he is able to fix up their passports too."

"Take Suzette, for instance. I took her from my Marseilles place. She takes in about four hundred francs a day. Well, she has the hips and breast, and energy too. That counts for much in our business. Would you like to see her, monsieur?"

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I thanked her and told her I would be most happy to do something the next time to help to swell this girl's bankroll.

"We have a sort of arrangement with most of the houses in Paris, Avignon, Bordeaux and Marseilles to exchange girls when they grow stale in their particular places. You have no idea, monsieur, what a change of air and environment will do. I have never seen it fail. After every fresh arrival my receipts go up."

And so Madame LaFleur continued her monologue until we were ready to bid her adieu. She invited me to return some day soon. She hoped for something else than talk.

A sort of market square that we passed on our way to my hotel was unique, even for Algiers. About the open area ran a colonnade of arches. Behind each arch was a room, occupied by women. And behind the doors of these arched booths women plied their profession in cribs of makeshifts of canvas, cheap rugs and jute bagging.

Our pace slackened as we reached the Rue Kattarougill, the street which, together with the Rue Sophonisbe and the Rue Barbarousse, harbors most of the brothels for which Algiers is well known. In these streets, spahis and tirailleurs, Zouaves and other colonials seek their relaxation.

As we pushed our way through the colorful jabbering throngs, we beheld women, slim or voluptuous,

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wearing around their necks tiny gold mascots—the Hand of Fatma (the daughter of the Prophet), clamoring in a singsong voice, gazing inquisitively at us as we passed. They were all in one-room cribs, in which I was “as welcome as a monkey in a tiger’s den,” my companion remarked. Here the traffic was wide open. Of course, they cater only to Arab clientele.

We stopped for a moment at one of the many peek rooms, an invention of the foreigners, which are open to anyone who has the price. A group of colonials clustered round a slit in a thin partition, while their tout, or souteneur, was taking in the cash. We looked into a spacious room, and a shapely wench was lying on a couch. For two francs one was allowed a peek. For two francs more one could go in and fondle the wench. And few could resist then, once having gone halfway, to lay down three francs more.

This was the domain of Bismillah, whose eyes were blackened with kohl, who wore an immense talisman, the Hand of Fatma, as well as some massive bands around her head, and had tattoo signs on brow, chin and cheek.

Outside, the tout, businesslike and with arms folded, made his note too delicate recommendations about the secrets of the amours of this Ouled Nail.

The men at the peekholes had become somewhat restless and their boisterous applause drowned the droning voice of the barker, who, devoid of any emotion, counted his money.

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Outside, near a mosque, a small crowd gathered around a brothel. Two men, indifferent as only these Moslems can be, spoke in loud tones with fierce looks and abrupt gestures. They were debating whether to enter the seraglio, while two girls competed excitedly to secure their patronage.

Then, from a minaret nearby the muezzin called for evening prayer. From all the lesser mosques the cry was taken up. "Allah is Allah, and Mahomet is his Prophet. The will of God. There is no strength but in Him. Oh God, forgive us our sins and open to us the gates of thy pity. Allah is Allah, and Mahomet is his Prophet."

The two stately looking Moslems entered the bad house. . . .

And all, including those who enter, will respond to the muezzin's summons with grateful hearts. . . . Allahu Akbar! God is Great!

TANGIER

The Maricones of the Barbary Coast

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The Maricones of the Barbary Coast

As I bent my head to escape contact with the lamp hanging outside Hadji Ephraim's coffeehouse in Tangier, a drowsy breath of wind came from the sea. A sort of careless yawn that was to give surcease from the heat to the plains of the Moghreb, lying between the Syrtes and the Atlantic.

It lifted the girl's jellabia hood backward and managed to show me her face, for just a split second. I started back a pace. I gazed at her, dazzled by the splendor of this creature whom I hardly believed to be real. There was not much time to indulge in thought, however, for she wrapped the veil about her person, hastily gathered up her burnoose and was gone into the dark of the night. The crescent moon shone over the bay.

I stood still for a moment, undecided what to do. Immovable, listening, hearing nothing but the wind, murmuring through the half-open door. A ray of light from a lamp tarried at the railing. On a couch inside, almost shrouded in darkness, an Arab was resting with his head on his hand. His amply wide burnoose, covering his naked body, fell in graceful folds down to his feet.

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I withdrew hastily, turned and followed the girl. I glimpsed her as she darted away, seeming to experience some difficulty because of her white burnoose, of which she had taken one corner in her teeth. It impeded her gait at every step.

She skirted the walls of the empty street. Palm trees, shaking their fronds in the light breeze, were the only other moving things. At times little gardens made black holes in the night. I experienced difficulty in pursuing this girl, who disappeared along a dark road that stretched away into seeming infinity.

A pack of dogs commenced to bark and we had come to a market place where camels lazily chewed their cud, which they took from big heaps of cut grass.

Then when the girl, now just a few steps ahead, had reached the entrance to a dark passage, which, as I came closer, looked like a shop, she slipped and fell. She threw a glance over her shoulder at me, got up and entered the place, leaving the door half open. I followed close on her heels and stood face to face with her; she gave me a tired smile.

It was not so much her long narrow eyes, or her flat nose, or her hair loosely held by a fillet of purple threads, or the rise and fall of her well-developed bosom or her beautiful complexion, like a silver-dusted vine, but it was a sigh, well . . . a sigh, the kind that is full of tenderness and something else, with which women all over the world seek to excite lethargic swains, that now intrigued me.

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She was a Jewess, no mistake about that. She had a face of rounded features, full lips, large forehead and high cheekbones and at times she hid her beautiful eyes from my gaze. Her thin dress, partly open under her gandoura, revealed the white skin of her sylph-like form. Her legs stood apart and revealed inviting shadows.

She uttered a few words in either Berber, Arabic or Jewish, but what she said I could not make out.

Then she cut the speechless interview short and dragged me, as it were, through the half-open door into a small room. A lamp, suspended above our heads, illuminated the room with a dull glare. Along the walls were low couches covered with cheap rugs. Once I began to discern things more clearly in the uncertain light, I made out a washstand and a large carafe of water.

She took off her shawl, the terrible, and the kerkeb, the flat sandals with their leather soles. Her name was apparently Cahena, for it was the only word she uttered repeatedly. She was named undoubtedly after the African Joan of Arc, the African Deborah, the national heroine of Israel's African branch.

I felt her breath on my face. A sort of prickling sensation ran down my spine and under the few roots of my hair. And then everything settled down for the night.

The night faded into the beginning of a new day. A drained lamp glimmered with the last spasm of its flame. It was the heralding of a Moroccan dawn.

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After this voyage of discovery with the intriguing maiden, the delightful soothing sun of the Atlas was making amends for the hours lost at sleep. I was sipping an absinthe at a table of a café in the Petit Sokko, the center of Tangier. It was the lull of the afternoon. A luscious balm was in the air. Before the café, Arab idlers played dominoes. In the shadow of an arch an Arab reclined on a rush mat. An old yellow-skinned man, a Marabout or holy man, in scrupulously clean robes and wearing smoked glasses, read a leaf with cabalistic signs.

On the sidewalk before the café, French officers were playing cards and puffing cigarettes. French soldiers, bronze lithe men with peaked caps, in white shirts with long sashes of indigo wool wrapped round their middles, clever precautions against climatic ailments, marched by in clouds of dust. From the other side came noisy Zouaves, in baggy pantaloons, their soft fezzes stuck on the back of their closely cropped heads, tassels dangling on their necks and wearing brown holland trousers, clasped below with short leggings. . . . Quite comical to watch were the cumbrously clad chasseurs. They swore at their swords constantly getting in the way of their much too big boots. From far away came the plaintive wail of an Arab flute and the rhythmic throb of the drum.

This was Tangier, a vicious city in an international protectorate that has basked for centuries on the shoulder of Africa, right under the very nose of

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Europe. Tangier, a fragment today of the savage world upon which Joseph's brethren looked with a touch of envy, nestled between the Syrtes and the Atlantic Ocean, on a high plateau of the Barbary Coast, between the Sahara and the Mediterranean.

A massive piece of rock, the ancient pillar of Hercules, looms in the distance, while nearby are the Atlas Mountains, with fertile valley and cultivated plains along the shores.

This massive rock rising out of the seas is a huge sentinel guarding the entrance to the lake, on whose shores great civilizations of the past have risen, disintegrated and succumbed. But Tangier remained, in the Garden of the Hesperides, almost as Carthaginian Hannibal found this flower of Northern Africa many centuries ago.

Tangier, the erstwhile den of pirates where the greatest of all novelists was once held in hardship and captivity, has an almost smoldering whiteness. Villas of the well-to-do dot the hillsides, while in the city proper a breath of Old World atmosphere seems to blend with barbaric strains. The city actually excites one's mental vision, something that the unsurpassable Algiers fails to do.

For thirteen hundred years the descendants of Mahomet, ruled by Shereefs, have managed Morocco, or Mauretania as its Roman invaders were wont to call it. It has a history whose pages have been bloodstained and checkered. Barbarous Moorish hordes and other

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savage tribes poured across the Atlas in ever-increasing numbers. They terrorized Europe and conquered Spain and yet founded a civilization which was kept alive while the rest of Europe was in darkness.

Tribute flowed into the Moorish coffers from all principal European countries to insure them against piracy and further enslavement.

Few are the vestiges of that ancient Moorish domination, except for the records they have left.

With the Spanish Inquisition around 1390, the decay of the Moorish nation became general. Since then many noble and rabbinic families, the aristocrats of Spanish Judaism, fearing renewals of these persecutions, left Spain and sought refuge in the Barbary States. Tangier, Oran, Constantine, Tlemcen and Algiers, Fez and Marrakesh became great Jewish centers, exercising powerful influence on the native Jews. The Spanish Jews until this day observe the customs of Spain, resisting the fatal influence of the Jews of Barbary proper.

This portion of Northern Africa—known among the Moors and the Arabs as the Moghreb, and among modern geographers as Africa Minor—has given shelter to numerous pure-blooded white races, such as the Lybians, or the Greek, and the Lub of the Bible, known today as the Berbers. These Berbers, in their resistance to invasion and torn by internecine strifes, permitted dominant peoples of all races and creeds to secure a foothold in their sahels, or plains, and tell, or

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plateaus, of the African coast. As for the native Jews, it was Ptolemy Soter, who set down 320 as the year this race established itself in the Moghreb, in whose life they played a most significant part.

Tangier today is an International city over which the sovereignty of the Sultan of Morocco is recognized. The Sultan is actually represented by a Mendub who, with his henchmen and assistant officials, has practically exclusive control. A French administrator with his British and Spanish assistants comprise the executive government, while the government offices are filled with recruits from all nationalities, with the exception of the public works administration, whose office is vested in that of a Spanish engineer. Local legislation, which in fact is an International Legislative Assembly, is responsible for and to native legislatures, which in turn is answerable to a committee of control, maintained by the Consul General of the powers that adhere to it. As the United States and Italy have not adhered to this status, subjects of these two powers take no active part in Tangier administration. Moors and Jews are Moorish subjects and are excluded from jurisdiction in the International administration, which, as can be expected, adds to the complications of handling this city. Moorish and Jewish cases are handled in the Islamic and rabbinical court of law, whereas mixed tribunals administer their jurisprudence over the whites. These tribunals voice their opinions, too, in those European cases where natives are implicated.

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Now, strange as it may seem, there are three post offices, British, Spanish and French, and before the World War there was a German.

The city of Tangier has not benefited from French administration as, for instance, have other cities in Algeria and Morocco where, as I have pointed out, the French have not endeavored to change the Oriental aspects and the customs and habits of the peoples of the country. Tangier is a protectorate and—unlike Algeria where there has been interference and the sale of intoxicants to the natives and gambling have become criminal offenses—absinthe can be openly bought, and not so long ago roulette wheels were to be found on all corners of the streets while they were also used in all houses of ill fame.

This International city is totally unlicensed and therefore uncontrolled. It has taken on many of the Europeans' vices, yet failed to profit much from the blessings of modern government and administration. For example the Spaniards in Algeria having had the opportunity centuries back to get a taste of the Moors' virtues and vices, reciprocated by sending over to Tingis, this ancient city of the Romans, as their ambassadors, an extraordinary army of homosexuals. These young men have their swing wherever the vicious Moor and the perverted Arab carry the crescent banner.

..

Under the roof of the café, which sheltered me from the Moorish sun, a variegated company was engaged

in drinking. My Arab guide, in true Moorish character, had gone to sleep trusting to fate, feeling that at some time of day I would be ready to start my expedition into the bowels of Tangier. Goats were wandering in the street and even strayed into the small hotel garden. At a corner, facing a native restaurant, I saw a man being bled by a barber for congestion. This seemed a most useful remedy, as it was explained to me later, simple as can be, when properly done, and doing no harm whatsoever to the victim.

The only thing necessary was to make an incision in the neck. The surgeon—in this case the barber, dressed in his rather comical garb, placed in the incision a metal tube, to which a small cup was attached. A vacuum was created by suction in the cup and the patient, judging by the forlorn look on his face, seemed greatly relieved.

My guide looked at me from beneath one eyelid, and seeing that I was not ready to go, turned over on his side. Like the rest of his countrymen, he belonged to either the laziest or the most industrious species of homo sapiens in the world. There is no happy medium. More than seventy per cent of the population eke out an existence by chance pilfering, while the rest enjoy life on the 200 festival days of the 364 in a year by loafing and, as is customary among all peoples of Islamic faiths, take it easy on the other days.

"Come on, Ayoub," I called. I must have startled him for he got up so hastily that he fell over a dog, who yelped loudly and limped away on three feet.

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It was later in the afternoon, yet the rays of the sun, while not so scorching as at noontime, were striking the town square with unrelenting vigor. The place was thronged with townspeople, braying donkeys and asthmatic, stupid-looking dromedaries. The braying of the donkeys did much to my musical ear. In leaving the place I stumbled over the lanky legs of a Frenchman, who spilled most of his fizz over his colored pants, and yet, with the true politesse of his race, uttered apologies and then went back to his apéritif, a cherished and inviolable indulgence no true Frenchman would forego.

My guide, a lithe young Arab with but one eye, but seeing much more than many people do with two, pushed his way through a crowd that was gathered in a knot. And here we came upon a group of Marabouts, of whom there seems to be a surplus in Morocco. These holy men were demonstrating their everlasting, undying saintliness, and they share the rest of the Marabouts' universe with hundreds of other Saints. Death among them is not a necessary prerequisite to canonization and almost, without exception, these holy men are self-ordained.

Probably a great percentage of these self-appointed Saints are harmless lunatics of varying degree, but with a philosophy and creed that commands respect, reverence and charity from all who come and hear them. They strut like Joseph's brethren through the dusty Moroccan streets. Woe to those who incur their wrath. Blessed are those who are blessed by them.

And here they were, these tireless fakirs, dancing to the tune of the derbouka and drum, howling as the on-lookers prostrated themselves on the dusty soil in worship and admiration.

The bystanders, among whom were men and women, boys and youths, as a token of their undying admiration kept touching the foreheads of these Marabouts with their none too clean fingers. Monotonous was the beat of the drum. The dancers smiled with pallid lips and kept up their whirling until they dropped to the ground in a kind of religious frenzy. Their reward was not only a howl from the audience but also a deluge of coins and paper money of all denominations.

We nudged our way through the milling crowd that in incessant bustle filled the square. At another corner were two camels, roaring fearfully as they strode along. Little black donkeys, whose long ears flapped lazily in the heat, kicked with their feet all the dogs that came within their reach. Flocks of black goats with short horns and stubborn mules were engaged in the agreeable pastime of biting each other's ears. A dense throng of Arabs in burnoose as well as many Jews in blue robes and skullcaps, roamed about with furtive looks. Natives of Sousse in dark blue garments and black jellabias introduced an incongruous element into this tranquil harmony of white and gray and brown all blending in a neutral shade of exquisite softness.

*By a little bazaar a group of women and children crouched almost immovably on the sandy soil, watch-

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ing the antics of an Arab. I edged close. And here I witnessed something that I had actually seen a number of times in the Far East. An extraordinary incident in which an Arab and a scorpion were the dramatis personæ.

It is a racial trait of the Arab to seek a mysterious connection between religion and animal life. This was brought home to me as I watched this Arab, who had caught a scorpion, an animal resembling a miniature lobster and plentiful in these regions.

This charming little animal was pointing its tail with venomous sting upwards. Instead of killing the little brute, with the weapon he always carries, the Arab had reserved for this pest a much more intriguing fate. Egged on by the spectators, he commenced a most remarkable performance that for native ingenuity did not know an equal.

He forced the animal down to the ground with a stick, and with another stick drew a circle around it. He then released the scorpion, which, believing it had regained its liberty, commenced to go around the circle at a tremendous pace, yet never going outside it.

The Moslem sat with a large and attentive crowd around him. Solemn as a judge he watched the scorpion's every movement. He bent lower and lower anxious not to miss a move.

Then, satisfied that the scorpion had made a sufficient number of revolutions, the Moslem divided the circle by drawing a line across the center; thus the

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scorpion was left but half the circle for its maddening revolutions. It kept this up for a few minutes and the faster it moved the wilder became the outbursts of the savagely shouting crowd. Through it all the Arab remained unmoved, except for the fierce glimmer in his cruel eyes as he watched his prey.

And this procedure was kept up for some time, so that finally the scorpion was left a space no larger than its own body.

The grand moment, for which the Moor had waited with the true Moghreb ferocity, had come. Utterly dazed, the thing found itself caught in a space so small that it was barely able to move. Its venomous tail in the air, it began to turn so fast that it was difficult for one to follow it. And, curious as it may seem, it never thought of venturing outside the boundary line that the Moslem had so carefully drawn in the sand.

Then came the climax. Terrified at that mysterious something it could not fathom, the end was in sight. The scorpion began to whirl madly.

"It won't be long now," my guide whispered to me.

The Arab stood erect, like a marble statue, waiting for the kill.

And then—the scorpion stuck its venomous point into its own tail and so killed itself. The audience applauded. The Arab spat on the ground . . . his cruel work was done.

If I were disposed to muse upon the vagaries of Moorish cruelty this was the time and place. But then,

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I thought, there is after all too wide a gulf between white and brown to lay down a dogmatic analysis of their psychology.

"Tu vois," said my guide as we walked on, and he rolled his one and only eye with the strange familiarity that bespoke his kind, "you shall see, monsieur, in the Casa Freha, in the Baba Marshan, the finest dancer of all; much finer than you may have seen in any terpsichorean palace of Algiers."

We passed along dusty roadways where a weird conglomerate of the world seemed to mingle. A people whose blood was either pure or streaked with dozens of different strains: Arabian, Assyrian, Phœnician, Greek, Roman, Canaanite, Jewish, French, Maltese, Levantine. A miniature of the world, with adventurers from every clime, traders, sleek merchants of the cities, peasants of the hills and Arabs as gloomy as the sullen desert.

We penetrated the Jewish quarter. My Arab guide spat on the first dog that crossed his path. This ancient quarter, called the Mellah, is located some distance from the town. Tangier, which has a wall and a kasbah (a fortress) and a Medina, which is the Arab city, is separated by another wall from the Mellah. Here thousands of Jews have lived for many hundreds of years, while they have suffered all sorts of persecutions. They lived and died here and never ventured forth, for to remain offered the best protection from

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the assaults of the Moor, although they suffered all the injustices, miseries and humiliation endured by their unfortunate brethren in the old-time ghettos of Middle Europe.

They were set free in 1870, and it is to be hoped that in this Moorish ghetto the tragic past, with its razzias, persecutions and rapine, will never return. But most of them stayed within the Mellah, and it remains a little city by itself, a Jewish city within a Moorish city, and is typical of the old Mellahs ruled centuries ago by their own Judaic laws. Family life and manners and customs have undergone few changes, but two racial qualities—hospitality and solidarity—have almost disappeared.

The segregated quarters of the Jews bristle and seeth with a turbulent humanity and present a very strange picture. It is a general custom for the men to shave their heads, they allow two locks to grow around their ears and oftentimes leave a tuft of hair at the crown of the head. Here are bearded men, dressed in the black kaftan of the Jews of Spain, while there are also many in simple gandouras, their heads covered with a fez, or handkerchief. The women are pretty, belonging to the handsome Spanish types, yet prematurely aged and worn out; their heads are covered with handkerchiefs, which is peculiar to the Jewesses of the remainder of the Moroccan desert.

The streets are narrow, the houses are built in Moorish style, having two or three stories. Each

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house gives shelter to more than one family and often as many as a dozen people live in one house. This accounts partly for the loose living of these Moorish Jews, among whom also the strangest cults and superstitions prevail. Too frequent cases of violation of their women, and the extreme poverty in which many of them live, have been instrumental in creating a large class of prostitutes. Many of them therefore live with Mussulman protectors, and there are many Jewish dancing women, known as scichas, who have no compunction about revealing the charms of the swaying ligheness that makes the other half of their profession of dancing so profitable. There is no difference between these scichas and ordinary prostitutes. With apologies to Kipling I could say, "The Tangier scichas and the American nightclub sweetie are sisters under the skin."

But it is among the nomadic tribes of Jews of the Sahara that we find really strange and ancient customs persisting to this day. Particularly, some of the most striking marriage customs prevail among these Sahara Jews. On the day of the marriage, the girl visits the ritual bath, which, because of a shortage of water in the Sahara, is changed only once every six months. This water is unspeakably dirty and very unsanitary but these people are not particular on that score. After the girl has had her bath, she is led back to the house of her parents where she is adorned in bridal clothes and then, barefoot, is carried on the skin

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of a wild sheep to the house of her husband. As soon as the cortège of young men who carry her has reached the house, she is taken to the room on the first floor, while the balance of the young men wait below in the courtyard for the most interesting part of the ceremony.

As she lies in her sheepskin, the bride is swung or rather dropped through the window into the courtyard below, and fortunate indeed is the man who manages to catch her before she touches the dust. For it is he who is allowed ceremoniously to carry her to the bridal chamber. And his is the privilege to remain so that he may lend a helping hand to the husband.

A bed is taboo, so the consummation takes place on a mound of soft earth. Almost directly next door the guests are making merry and eating kouskous. The mother-in-law, like all mothers-in-law, also has a function. For she enters the room of the nouveaux mariés for the purpose of being the first to congratulate the young couple. She then invites all the other women in the party. These women had been anxiously waiting for the great moment. It is then that the proud mamma, beaming with pride and admiration, shows the negligee, which she has taken off the bride, to the sensation-seeking women.

This affair has its dark side too. For should the girl have been indiscreet before marriage, she is divorced right then and there. And for his trouble the angry husband claims the return of all the money expended,

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including a fixed penalty. When the marriage is satisfactory, the girl goes to her parents, who are obliged to support her, and where she gives birth to her children. When the husband is absent the wife has to don mourning. She never takes a bath, except to wash her hands and she is never allowed to eat in the presence of her husband. Should her husband fail to treat her well, she can undo her marriage merely by shouting "nifex!" (which means "your nose") three times in succession. She is then entitled to retain her marriage gift.

In giving birth to children, the aid of a midwife is dispensed with. The mother about to give birth is placed in a seated position over a hole filled with hot ashes. As soon as the parturition has taken place, the woman is given kouskous and butter. When the children reach the age of four or five they are mated, except for the children of the orthodox Jews, who do not get married until they are twelve years old. Infantile mortality among these Jews is quite high. The boys only are nursed by the mother. The girls, who count for very little, have to be content with the milk of the goat.

Let us revert for a moment to Cahena, the Tangier Jewess who gave us our first experience of sinful Tangier. She was named after a famous Sahara Queen, whose interesting history has always intrigued me much.

This Sahara Queen had placed herself at the head

of the Berber tribes, working for a cessation of the rivalries and internecine troubles that had undermined their very existence. Through her daring, victorious career she earned for herself, by her courage and patriotism, the medaille du mérit. Being a woman of extraordinary beauty, her hand was sought by the chiefs of many powerful tribes. She rejected them all and particularly that of a chief, a tyrant, who was conspicuous for his vicious and debauched character. He demanded seignorial rights from every girl coming to his attention and liking. So his eye had fallen on Cahena too. In order, however, to free herself and her people from such a pest, she devised a plan whereby she hoped to circumvent the deeds of this tyrant. She offered him her hand in marriage. And on the day of her nuptials when he was about to claim his fulfillment, she, like a new Judith, plunged a dagger in his breast. She was then proclaimed the Queen of all the Berber tribes.

Her reign was successful and she conquered the Mussulmans in a series of triumphant campaigns. City after city paid her tribute and even several Christian dignitaries came to offer her congratulations.

By an irony of fate, the Jews, who had looked upon the Arabs as the liberators of Byzantine rule, failed to share in the general rejoicing. They cursed this nomad queen and went so far as to compare her to a Nebuchadnezzar. Withal, for many years peace reigned and prosperity ruled on the Dark Continent. Until, after

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five years of quiet, the Arabs returned with a powerful army. The great Amazon Cahena assembled all her forces while even the Christians promised her aid, but somewhat later, jealous of her successes, they concluded a separate peace with the Moslem.

This treachery filled her breast with resentment and fury. It roused her to renewed action and in calling the Berbers together she resorted to the most unusual measures. She laid waste all of Northern Africa, cities were sacked, gardens were ruined, and all that might aid the Arab was demolished. She laid waste to an empire, for which Christian and Jew never forgave her. Desertion after desertion of Berbers followed.

So in 703, the Moslems under General Hassan again invaded the Moghreb and the two great armies met at ancient Thydrus, whose Roman amphitheater still bears the name of the great Queen.

It was here that Cahena met her Waterloo. The carnage was so great that no Berber escaped. Cahena's sons advised her to seek refuge in the hills, but she exclaimed solemnly that she, who had commanded the roumis, the Berbers, and the Arabs, ought only to die as a Queen. And she fell gloriously by her own sword.

To end this story in true Moslem manner, General Hassan, not content with her downfall, neatly cut off her head and sent it in a beautiful casket, set in jewels and gold, to the Caliph of Bagdad in the year 704.

And thus Cahena, the great Berber Queen earned for herself a place of honor in the Woman's Hall of

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Fame, beside the pulchritudinous and unfaithful Helen of Troy and the faithful and beautiful Penelope. And, notwithstanding the harshness of the Bible on women, beside such Jewish heroines as Rebekah, Deborah, Ruth, Esther or Vashti, the first Queen, and France's Joan of Arc.

My guide and I carried on through narrow streets, passing one-room houses where Jewish girls in gaudy dresses, sat on the low stoops and flashed the usual importuning smiles. Before one door a very young girl, she could not have been more than ten, invited me in her meek voice to come in, while an obese woman, peeking through a slit in the door, egged her on in a raucous voice. From next door came a man's voice, a weird wailing sound.

* In a small shop, a coffeeshop, an Arab emptied a glass of raki, a brandy that is made from dates. To see this Moslem drinking in the open was rather a strange thing since, under the Moslem law, drinking liquor is worse than sin. So, for their drinking the Arabs frequent the Jewish quarter.

Two half-naked girls were playing in the dust. They were blind. Their eyes were inflamed by a disease called ophthalmia, the scourge of the Jews in the ghetto. It is easy to incur disease since these people disregard all standards of cleanliness and are continually exposed to the African sun. I saw another pitiful sight, a stout woman whose body was wasted

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away, whose teeth were gone and whose eyes were sore and red.

Both Arab and Jew are subjected to this terrible eye infliction, which medical science has been unable to exterminate. History has preserved for posterity the story of a case whereby a native was cured by the skill of a Jew—in a book dealing with the rabbis of Tlemcen, and recording the exploits of a rabbi who was known for his miraculous cures. Ephraim Anquava, Rabbi of Tlemcen, a scholar of repute, had in the year 1391 come to Morocco to seek refuge from the Jewish persecutions in Spain. From Marrakesh he proceeded to Tlemcen, seated on a lion, with a serpent issuing from its jaws.

Arriving before the city he halted in the field. The natives on beholding this strange spectacle came forth and offered him the freedom of the town. The Rabbi visibly moved by this token of hospitality, decided to stay and to continue his Talmudic studies, which in Castillia were so rudely interrupted. He took up his abode in a ramshackle house and here he devoted considerable time to curing the terrific eye disease that seemed to ravage the natives of the district. A Sultan, Abu Tachefin, who reigned at Tlemcen, had only one daughter who, shortly after the advent of the Rabbi was stricken with this severe eye ailment. For days the medical men of the district labored on her case, yet with no success. Then the advisers of the Sultan acquainted the Sultan with the strange fact that a Jew,

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mounted on a lion had come to town and surely must have been a Messiah or at least a messenger from the Lord. So the Sultan ordered his Vizir to bring the Rabbi before him. And the Rabbi prescribed a simple cure, which proved so effective that in a very few days the girl was on the road to recovery. The Sultan was so elated that he sent for the Rabbi and embracing him, asked him to name his reward.

"Hear ye, oh Noble Sultan," the Rabbi spoke, "all that I ask for is to be allowed to bring to your noble city, all of those Jews that dwell in nearby towns and elsewhere and also to be allowed to build a small house of prayer."

This simple wish was granted at once and so from all sides, from Spain and from Morocco, the Jews came to this town, and lost no time in building their house of the Lord. And thus the Jewish community of that city had its start.

On the tomb of this Rabbi's grave, which to this very day can be viewed, appears the following inscription:

"This is the tomb of Him who was our pride, the Crown of our Head. The Light of Israel, our helper, our chief and our Master. A divine Cabalist. Illustrious wherever Israel was scattered, a performer of miracles. The Head of the community. The Chief of all Rabbis, the Great Rabbi Ephraim Anquava. May his memory be a protection to us and to all our Israelite brothers."

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And now to continue the trip through the streets of Jewish Tangier where the police have magic ears, hearing and seeing what they wish but deaf and blind to the things that merely mean money out of pocket.

At one of the houses, in a street that actually seethed with lusty-looking Jewesses, my boy stopped and beckoned me to go in. An obese, big-bellied, yet good-looking woman, with lines in her face and ripples in her abdominal region showing her age, came shuffling out of the room, emitting some sort of wild cry, purporting to be of joy at having a cash customer. Behind her came a blustering, exuberant young Jewess, with an air of unintrospective youth, a decidedly sensual exterior, Spanish jaws and a froth of dark hair. Her flimsy dress, partly open, revealed a pair of well-shaped legs. There was about her a brittle air of ancient racial characteristics which did not overcome the imprint of the ghetto.

Her face lighted childishly in a greeting, spoken in half-Arabic and half-Jewish vernacular. Her cheeks bloomed like a tea rose and her eyes, fortunately not so cold as those of most of her profession, shone like black datura seeds in a pod.

I entered the room of this girl, whose dancing and other virtues were highly recommended by my guide. The older woman, on closer acquaintance, appeared to be the girl's mother and mighty proud of it. The very large room was like all similar rooms, meagerly

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furnished. An iron bed with but a flimsy blanket, one chair, a divan, a washstand and a few pictures, drawn from various parts of the world, on the walls, which latter were wet from damp. Cigarette butts on the floor and odors of soap and cheap scents spoke well for the extent of the girl's clientele.

The little dove began to disrobe. This did not take long as, like many of her Western sisters in that particular trade, she wore absolutely nothing under her frock. For the price of the dance, so her mamma informed her, I had to pay in advance. It was the custom.

The girl, sensing the fact that I was not made of stone, began to make love with her eyes and by tender smiles and bolder innuendoes. Then undulant, as her muscles flexed in rhythm, she came closer, just for a moment.

Mamma grabbed hold of a derbouka that had been resting under the bed, and to its accompaniment she began to chant a most monotonous plaintive tune, that in her raucous voice sounded weird, yet captivating at times.

Before the girl began her dance, she clad her small tender feet in colored pointed pumps, made like sandals, crisscrossed with bands of golden thread. For a moment she looked about the shadowy room with half-shut eyes. The dim light of the lamp revealed her beautiful bare breasts, the delicate line of her shoulders, hips and hair. Then she smiled as her hand flew

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to her right breast, and she began her dance with the abandon of a mænad. Her body exploded into contortions of a sensuous, almost sinister exuberance, yet with a grace and elasticity and finely coördinated movement of arms and cobralike suppleness of the body and parting of her over-membranous lips.

I looked at the antics of this girl with somewhat appraising eye. I must confess here that the voice of morality sang to me softly. Lust began to cry out with pain, that lingered between desire and self-denial and philosophical precepts. She stood before me like a goddess, panting for breath. She began to study my face, looking for that something that would bring more money into the cash box, just as the older woman's voice began to falter. Its moan took on a meaning, so wistful that it blended almost with the motions of the girl. And a gleam came into the girl's black eyes as she whirled her sinuous body like a snake and began to purse her mouth in endearing terms. She came closer and closer. She bent her body in contortions and came so close that I could feel her warm breath.

The older woman resumed her derbouka playing and crooning and the girl settled back into her dance, which grew greedier and with a sting of desire that was almost villainous. It became mighty confusing at times, for it was a most passionate assault on my senses. These histrionics held me spellbound for many minutes. I pitted myself heroically against the one thing for which this dance was intended.

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I could not help noticing her luscious mouth and perfect buttocks. I fought hard to keep my eyes from gazing at her. Her shapely legs were full of craving and she almost swooned. She studied my face closely every time she came near me and for twenty minutes now she had very cunningly tried to arouse in me those emotions that would ultimately have led to the bed that stood invitingly in the far corner. One of the doors, behind which, so to speak I had, as a protection, against my truer self locked myself in, was in danger of being opened. For one moment, and without warning, I felt myself slipping.

She smiled. . . . Aha, she thought to herself, "he relents" as she studied my expression and emotions from under her now almost devilish eye. Then she changed her tactics. She whirled about, as each move of her abdomen, each sway of her hips each spread of her beautifully formed legs, became superb gestures of ecstatic appeal. She became more unrestrained, anxious more than ever to please me and give joy. She loped along with insurgent thighs and I began to feel like a crow while this girl was my carrion.

Since I am no hypocritical prude, I must confess here that I delighted for moments in this girl's efforts for physical conquest. What lovely lips she had——

I again belabored my ego. The torments became stronger, almost tantalizing in their continuance. The old woman began to beat the drum for all she was worth. Yet the dance, that for an average dancer

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would have been crushing, left this madonna* with hardly a trace of fatigue.

What lovely skin and deliciously formed breasts. Almost like pomegranates in color and contour.

Yet I managed to expel the jinn of lust and desire from my overheated senses.

The derbouka ceased its nerve-racking drumming. The old woman stopped her importuning purr and the girl, sighing and panting, sank on the none too clean bed. It was the finale.

I searched for my pocketbook, for the extra bak-sheesh that I felt was more than deserved.

The girl, looking at me with puckered brow, worried, afraid, thinking maybe that, since I had not wanted to taste the fruit, I might not be so generous.

The older woman held out her podgy hand. She purred, it would cost but five pesetas more to stay.

It was mighty fortunate for me that my one-eyed Pancho poked his head through the door. It actually helped, I must again confess, to drive the evil spirit from my head. He fired a few incoherent questions at the girl and at me, the sum of which was to ascertain if I had enjoyed myself.

The girl put on her flimsy dress and her enticing nakedness disappeared from view, to be shown again in all its witchery before the next prospect, who, I hoped, would not be such a fool as to pass up that luscious fruit.

And so at last I left the darkness of this room, in

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thé Rue de la Galèche, accompanied by the one-eyed and inquisitive Pancho, and we made our way with difficulty through a milling mob, into the mysterious gloom of the African night, just as it began to drop its mantle over the earth.

As we reentered the Arabian quarter, a human voice broke the silence from afar. The voice of the muezzin that gave Tangier the Moslem call for prayer. El Hamdul 'Illah—It shall be so.

What a renegade my guide was—or maybe he thought I was. For he was doing his best to take me to places, the likes, he believed, I had never seen.

And now I was to pay a visit to the horticultural show of the Spanish maricones.

Abnormal pathological examples, going under the name of maricones, or Spanish prostitutes, have it all their own way in Morocco. To the perverted man, Tangier's maricón district, in the narrow streets around the Rue de la Galeche, is a Mecca. Now the predominance of homosexuals in Morocco need not be taken as an indication that such individuals are actually in control of Tangier. What it simply means is that these Spanish perverts cater to a demand that is large and that they know always exists.

The solidity of this business, carefully protected by France's doctrine of laissez faire and not at all restricted by law, rests upon the philosophical basis that whatever the eye does not see should not bother one.

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Japan has its Yoshiwara, New York its call houses, filthy films, apartment house drags and promiscuous married women, Hamburg and Berlin their predominance of mentally diseased sadists, masochists and homosexuals, but Tangier can lay claim to a nightmare of cavorting male harlots and degenerates, Spanish half-castes, these maricón belles, who are the very delight of the Moors. In this and other streets, whole rows of houses, filled to overflowing with these wrecks of humanity, were devoted to providing victims for Arabs and Moors.

By day it was a drab street. By night it became garish and loud, the hotbed of Tangier's perverted amusement world.

A Spanish Beau Brummel, in the Rue de la Galèche, loitering before the door of a tiny crib, looked me over, gave me a smile and whispered what seemed to me a word of endearment, the gist of which became perfectly clear a little later. He nodded and turned and I followed the glance of his eye. He had invited me to come over and enter his Valhalla.

My lusty young Arab guide recommended it highly, seeing in this another chance to take a nap in the dirty sand of the street.

I beheld a creature dressed in an evening gown, with painted lips and powdered face, whose high-pitched voice and feminine gestures provided a thoroughly sick sensation at first.

I entered a room where the maricon made his living.

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All I beheld at the moment was a crude wooden bench. The room was lighted by an oil lamp. The house, so my guide had said, was one of the oldest in town. Originally of Spanish origin, it attracted a large trade. The inmate had the reputation of being sadist, masochist and homosexual combined, a veritable freak of nature, the like of which, so I believe, is rare.

He began to importune in a high-pitched voice. The sum total of his monologue was that forty francs was his price. There was some commotion outside the door. My host asked to be excused for a moment and he came back with a Moslem in tow.

The lamp flickered down upon the head of the Moslem. It etched his profile, flashed upon his eyes that shone fiery and solemn, and lightly caressed the strong muscles of his torso that appeared through the opening of his burnoose.

What a pair these two actually made. The maricón, preening his eyes and making fantastic motions with his feminine body, sighed with passionate yearning, while the Moslem, a gigantic figure, powerful neck, head with short frizzled hair, his face set in a vicious grin as he gazed upon his amoureux at times looked at me suspiciously from under his drooped eyelids. When assured that the maricón had not been for me, he changed expression and his deep-set eyes gleamed like funeral lamps in a sepulchral chamber.

And then followed what turned out to be the orgiastic apotheosis of maricón-Moslem undertaking.

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How to describe the scene that unfolded itself before my eyes?

In the yellow glow of the lamp I could see the white man and the brown man on the couch.

I left this place and called my guide. He had fallen asleep. He woke with a start, smiled at me assuringly with his one eye and showed his teeth and then got up. . . .

Almost directly next door was a row of shanties, filled with maricones soliciting. The womanless street was aswirl with bearded men in fezzes and burnouses. Business seemed brisk and full of promise in the Rue de la Galèche.

And over all this towered Mahomet's edifice, a mosque, from which a magic voice sounded a call to prayer.

CASABLANCA AND BOUSBIR

*Aristide Dubois—Expert of Women
and Fruit*

CASABLANCA AND BOUSBIR

Aristide Dubois—Expert of Women and Fruit

"**LAW**, order and justice, clad in a turban, rules under the tricolor in Casablanca," said Monsieur Aristide Dubois, grand-industriel, as he winked his eyes, while his eyelids drooped at times, in a brooding smile and his mouth arched in a grimace of meditation.

Monsieur Aristide had a true Gallic face, lean though compact body, refined features, sparkling eyes, large red lips, and a little mustache that he kept twisting around nervously. His dark, kinky hair, parted meticulously in the center, greased and plastered into little waves, and reeking with perfumes and pomades, from the Rue de la Paix, looked like a toupee.

He wore a huge diamond ring, a gem the size of an ostrich egg, while a similar stone glistened in a pin on his colorful tie.

Monsieur Dubois was a wealthy and prosperous merchant. He had made a million or two in the selling of dates and figs—something he did not fail to impress me with, anxious as he was all the time to make me fully appreciate his greatness. But what he failed to tell me was that much of the money that flowed into his coffers flowed out again and found its way into the

stockings, chemises and peignoirs of les belles femmes. He was, so he emphasized with all the force of his alluring and brilliant personality, a patron of the arts. He was also, I knew, one of the most assiduous patrons of the houses in Bousbir, the queerest city of women in Morocco, houses that he provided with women.

I had come to Casablanca, a city that until the advent of the French twenty years ago was practically unknown, to visit Monsieur Dubois, and to get some insight into the traffic at Bousbir. Bousbir is in reality only a district, a suburb of Casablanca, and the extent of the white slave traffic in these parts had caused native and French newspapers to undertake an inquiry.

After the initial conventional conversation had died down, I managed to draw out the date and fig merchant on the subject of his joint enterprises.

As we got better acquainted his stories became like whiffs from a pigsty. He boasted of having possessed more women than Solomon is said to have had. Though I did not ask him point-blank, I am sure that his tales of women and their orgies extended far beyond his personal contacts. For if he had lived through all that he boasted he had, he would have been indeed a champion.

Monsieur Dubois' travelogue of sin has remained in my memory. It afforded me a picture of the extent of his trade. I learned that the lines of supply stretched out all over Morocco, into the lust houses of Bousbir,

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outside the sun-kissed white walls of Casablanca and into Sidi-bel-Abbès, on the Oued Dekerra River.

He implied that he did not trust even his own friends, for whenever a new batch of girls arrived from the Hills, by which he naturally meant the girls from beyond Biskra and Ouled Naïl, they were examined by his physician and friend, in his presence. If a girl was found to be a virgin, she was ushered into the grand-industriel's private office and provided with a trade-mark and stamped for general use.

Claiming seignorial rights, as would a medieval master from his serfs, he never failed to provide the girl with a testimonial. This she was instructed to hang in her seraglio, like a doctor's or a university diploma.

Now these girls, as they come from the Hills, are not, like their Japanese sisters, educated for their profession and taught the customs of the trade, nor is the roughness deriving from their rural environments removed. Their heads are empty of phrases of endearment. The natural characteristic of the girl of the Hills is a sure proof that she will return the customer's embraces with necessary fervor.

He then began to annotate a list of these women's depravities, the sum of which was that these women would do anything for a handful of francs.

"The Arab girl," said Monsieur Dubois, as he glanced at me whimsically, "is not half so vicious as her European or American sister. You will find this

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out for yourself. The number of queer places here you can count on your fingers, monsieur.

"But you want to know more about Bousbir, is that not so?

"Strange stories have been told, mon ami, of Bousbir, the 'City Red,'—'the queer female city' or the city that is said to bar all men. That this city bars all men is not true. What really happens is that, once she has entered it, no woman may leave this place of her own free will. Men are not denied the right to visit them whenever they will, but they are not allowed to live there permanently.

"The place itself is built on what was once Arab ground that extended in the olden days to the southeast of Casablanca, in the direction of the Lighthouse D'El-Hank, near the Porte de Marrakesh. In those days—and now I am speaking of a time more than fifteen years ago, which I remember well—the district was composed of one single street. It was the nucleus of a quarter into which flowed from all directions a great number of narrow little streets. They were lined by rows of small houses which sheltered women of all colors and hues. All this was the property of a man by the name of Prosper (a rather appropriate name!) and when he had made his pile he went to live in Paris, where he is retired. The name Prosper soon changed to Bousbir, as it was miscalled by the natives.

"Non, monsieur, the place as I knew it in the old days stood in very bad odor. Not one night passed

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without one or more murders, that also earned for the place the name of la Ville Rouge. It was not prudent to steal about this place unarmed after dusk as the police and the administration were powerless to offer even the smallest protection. The traffic was made more harmful by the fact that about fifty per cent of the people who frequented the place were adventurers, who had no hesitancy in shooting to kill.

"L'affaire d'amour or cherchez la femme, brought on many clashes in those streets between tirailleurs, Zouaves and légionnaires. The military police, the only ones, in fact, who tried to keep order in this section, were stationed in various quarters.

"Little was paid to the authorities for the privilege of running the bagnios,—simply a small assessment. Many of the girls acted as their own bouncers and for the more obstreperous clients a guild of self-appointed bouncers, drafted from the army of procurers, wielded their bludgeons and flung the unruly onto the dusty sidewalks for a price.

"Conditions in those days were truly deplorable. As soon as a client would enter one of those cribs, the girl would lock the door but dozens of the girls around would stand outside and peek through the keyhole. The rates were low, ranging from two to three francs. But, as you understand, the franc of those days had a much greater purchasing power."

Monsieur Dubois suddenly burst into laughter, as he began to relate an incident when pandemonium had

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broken loose in the quarter. It was caused by a price war, which forced prices down to a low of fifty centimes.

And as his hilarity at this thought had ebbed, he resumed: "The girls between themselves, and now I speak of the Mauresques, attracted more attention then than they do now. They were wont to become obnoxious in their behavior; words like cochon, dirty swine and louse flowed from their mouths, especially when they felt their attentions went unrewarded. Then Arab or white protectors would have a finger in the pie and commence a rumpus. Believe me, monsieur, it was not safe to invite trouble with them in those days.

"Mais, monsieur," said Monsieur Dubois, as he smiled again, with the sounds gurgling in the back of his throat, "those days are passé, and la Ville Rouge has become a city of the *Thousand and One Nights*, as you will see for yourself, very soon."

The telephone rang on the fig merchant's desk, just as I made a move to get up.

"Ah, Monsieur Degras. How are you, monsieur?" sang Monsieur Dubois's voice. "Ah, oui, I shall see you very soon." And as he turned to me, his lips parting in a happy smile, he imparted the information that the man he had just spoken to was an extraordinary person. The largest replenisher of the houses of the Boca in Buenos Aires, Degras was engaged in the business of buying, selling and transporting women. He had attacked a girl, a minor—his name and photograph

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were placed on the International Procurers Governmental blacklist, and his activities were now limited. Women of all nationalities have passed through his hands and he has supplied cocaine and opium and other narcotics to establishments in Fez, Rabat, Tangier and Oran—aided in his work by sailors of foreign vessels, who seem to be the go-betweens in this important trade.

"Ah, monsieur," he added with much gusto, "there is a man who has the flair of big business." I expressed a desire to meet this captain of the white slave trade.

He nodded. "You will, monsieur," he said. "He will remain here for a week. And here, monsieur," as he scribbled a few lines on a card, "are the introduction and the addresses in Bousbir you may need. And please do return soon," he added, with a twinkle in his eyes, "so that we may continue our talk."

I left, thanking him profusely for the information he had given me as he bowed me out of the door.

Just as I was about ready to leave the luxurious Transat Hotel in Casablanca, pleased with the perfect comfort afforded there, a little Arab rascal approached me. He seemed an intelligent little fellow, with sparkling eyes and dirty feet. He was vulgar yet quick, and sported a bright blue fez, the like of which I had never seen in all the Barbary States. He addressed me in French as he promised to escort me all over town and since he, so he emphasized, had escorted Americans

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before, he felt that he was entitled to hang on me in true Arabic fashion, like a leech. No matter how I tried to rebuff this little pest, he was not to be shaken. He attacked me in stubborn movements that left no way out. He had snared me as a hunter snares his quarry.

So barefooted Mustapha, complacent, now he had won, was to lead me. I was glad to get away since all morning I had been forced to listen to the tirades of an irate business man who was apparently fed up with the country. He had left, so he said, his town and his cronies and his business that was his all, back in the States. His wife and his daughter, Dorothy was her name, had insisted on his coming.

"Bah—buildings and cathedrals! Well, they're all right, but these miserable holes of Algiers and Tangier! No less than a plague."

"Why," said he, emphasizing every word with a pause, "this here country to me is but one big fake, a bluff." The more he fumed, the more disgusted he became.

"Take, for instance, those mosques and the Sphinx, that my wife and kid dragged me to. Piles of stone. Food! . . . What do they give ye here? Nothing but kouskous . . . fruit! So bitter they give ye a pain. And cold up here! Brrr. We couldn't get warm. And this here burg, Casablanca! My God! . . . the most God-forsaken town on this earth. All these places are rubbish, patched together and glorified by you authors,

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who must be in cahoots with all the tourist agencies in the world."

He sat in silence for a moment, having fulminated almost without a stop. And then, when he had caught his breath, he was seized by a new attack of hysteria, as, tossing his huge cigar from one corner of his mouth to the other, he pointed at some of the women members of a Cook's party, as they filed past the hotel.

"Look at those sheep, all bubbling over with Romance. Going nuts over these places, piles of stone and dirty natives, smelling like swine, dirty flies and chastised day in day out by desert dust and wind. Sun-kissed! . . . Baloney! . . . What a country to live in. No, siree," as he laughed himself into a fit, over his own joke, "a fine country to die in, by heck, and join the rest of the mummies that are buried all around."

Suddenly, as if hit by a bolt of lightning, he sat up and shut up like a clam. I turned around. Two women came over to where we sat. They were his wife and his daughter Dorothy.

"Daddy," purred friend wife, as the husband almost mechanically and as if by command jumped to his feet, hat in hand, "come along like a good boy to the native quarter, I want to do some shopping."

"Okay, mother," said my windy friend meekly, as he nodded good-bye to me.

We entered the autobus of the special service that connected Casablanca with the voluptuous city. There

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were only men in the bus. No need to ask what they were after in Bousbir. The bus reminded me of the Wanamaker bus in New York, but in size and compendium only. As the bus approached the outskirts of Bousbir, the city was dotted with myriads of lights. Nearer the city gate was the native city of Bidonville, which in the early hours of the evening presented a most picturesque appearance. At the other end of the town was the Jewish quarter, placed there by the French, away from the Arab quarter, aware as they are that there is continual altercation between the Jewish and Arabian hours.

And so we came to the most modern and luxurious city in all Morocco, devoted in its entirety to pandering to the lusts of men.

As we approached the gate, which is not unlike the gates in the Japanese Yoshiwaras in that it serves a similar purpose, I was at once impressed with the exquisite architecture of this city of the *Thousand and One Nights*, and convinced that its building must have been entrusted to expert hands. For they have created something of a show city and Coney Island combined, which pours plenty of money into the coffers of France.

The clever Frenchmen could not sanction the extinction of Bousbir, for the defenders of this system maintained that, since men are built the way they are built, prostitution, that has been with us ever since woman was the source of man's desire, will continue to

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exist and hence, a method had to be devised for its control.

So the French authorities have rebuilt on the old mess heap, a new city of sin, to save the health of the male population of Casablanca and that of all those pleasure-seekers, from other cities and abroad, whose first stop-over Bousbir happens to be.

The "heartbroken" municipality, guided, not by a desire to "feather its own nest" and thus fill its coffers, but by a humanitarian motive—the betterment of mankind, hit upon a method by which this could be easily accomplished. These good merchants and petits-commerciants consummated a splendid deal with a number of similarly patriotic and well-to-do men who were to act as concessionnaires, whereby, against a mere pittance of a few million francs a year these men obtained a concession, to run for ninety-nine years, that allowed them to erect, beautify and keep intact this modern delightful Babylonian cesspool. And in the police and the military is now vested its control.

On leaving the autobus, after our seventeen-minute ride, I came upon an enchanting scene. Near the entrance a souk—with its tinkling fountains with multi-colored mosaic decorations, set in a milieu of thousands of plants, whose fronds swayed in the breeze—exerted a charm reminiscent of the Cote d'Azur. Nothing seemed to have been overlooked by these French experts in their zeal and desire to metamorphose the erstwhile mess into a modern town. There

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was a Hamman or Moorish bathhouse, boulevards that were wide and airy, and a cinema, where obscene pictures were displayed—pictures that, I discovered later, were made in America. There were merchants' stores with all sorts of luxuriant wares, and hundreds of homes, artistically built and pleasant looking, while tiny parkways, cool in the heat of day, were graced with trees and benches that gave this love mart almost a rural aspect. And around all this were the walls and gates. The street through which we passed was one of bedlam and obscenity. It happened that the légionnaire and the soldat had received their pay and drunken men shambled from house to house, where in the doorways were white and native girls shouting their kronya, "come and have tea with me." They sported their curves and their flesh in the white light of the slowly waxing African moon. They tried to entice the men with extreme gestures and extravagant promises.

Many of the Moors here did not go barefoot, as elsewhere, and a number of Moorish girls were attired in continental fashion, to the very heels of their shoes, that were Louis Quinze.

I sauntered on, so far unmoved by the stereotyped and weary importuning of the harlots, while Mustapha followed in the dust. It was very strange to watch how the men as they passed from door to door laboriously and assiduously inspected the girls.

Some of these places seemed to have plenty to do. By the door of one, I counted ten men, standing in

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line—Zouaves, poilus, légionnaires and two civilians, patiently waiting their turn, to lay down the franc and seek the gate to heaven—or to the doctor, as is more often the case.

Near one place a knot of men were arguing a weighty problem—above their voices could be heard the haggling shrill cries of the harlots. There was a fracas between two souteneurs. I stopped in front of the door where the amiable gentlemen were arguing and fighting it out and I inquired as to the cause of the trouble. From what I could gather, one of these tradesmen had booked another man's woman and had handed out numbers, during that man's absence. This would have not been so bad if the man had stayed away. But grand malheur! The real owner came back and this started the fracas. I realized that my presence would not alter the case and decided to move on.

A charming person—needing no expensive decorations, big and gaudy, dressed from high-heeled shoes to hair in artificial jewels and sequins—was standing in the doorway of an emporium over which was the Hand of Fatma, the symbol of good luck. A tourist party of two men and one woman, attracted to this magnetic person, entered behind me, as the big woman began to advertise the circus. It was to be an encounter between a donkey and a Moor. The price of admission was one hundred francs. Under a sleezy bower, three Arab musicians, with derbouka and gimbri and viola, were adding to the general din.

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When I left the circus, I showed Mustapha the address from Monsieur Dubois of one of his favorites. His mouth twisted into a grin that was none too clean. I saw a twinkle in his eye as he turned on his dirty feet and I followed him.

In the open doorway of a brothel was a good-looking French girl, who might just have left the boulevards in Paris. Next door were Italian- and Spanish-looking girls, whispering their invitations to come in and enjoy. We emerged into another street that was more inviting. We had to push our way through the jabbering cosmopolitan throng, with here and there the képi of a policeman or military police bobbing up and down in the sea of pleasure-seeking humanity.

From all doors now peered inquisitive faces, fair and dark, plump and slender women. Some more enterprising than the rest, in face of strenuous competition, lifted up their flimsy garments and whispered their invitation to come and have tea with them. "A cup of tea" was their catchword for a good time.

Mustapha stopped. Over a door which was partly open was the Hand of Fatma. This door led into a courtyard and from an alcove came a sweet voice, inviting me to enter.

It was a small salon, sparsely illuminated by the light of two lamps placed in opposite corners on the low walls. After I got used to the sort of semi-thick atmosphere, I beheld the nymph herself, who seemed to be a girl of Spain. She greeted me with a smile.

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She was pretty and a gay red rose adorned her hair. Another was attached to her petticoat. She seemed sensitive and for a moment the expression on her face was a combination of sadness and apprehension, as she scrutinized me; then her scarlet lips parted in an almost suppressed sigh of relief. I would do.

I decided that one had to respect Monsieur Dubois's judgment, as my eyes paused for a moment on the certificate, with his *nom de plume*, gracing the wall. He surely was a good picker. Yet the girl seemed out of place, and I felt that she must have come to Monsieur Dubois in some tragic manner.

Footsteps sounded outside. The door to the salon opened slightly. Two Frenchmen, *poilus*, peeked in.

"Ah, monsieur, pardon," said one of the men, with true French politeness. "I did not know madame entertained." And as they withdrew I heard one man say: "Never intrude on a *camarade*."

Then as I crushed out the fire of my cigarette, the girl came over and sat beside me on the bed, and began to talk. As she talked, she used quaint expressions, old phrases of ancient Castile, and her enunciation, pronunciation and syntax were absolutely correct.

I told her I was a friend of Monsieur Dubois. I was very pleased to have the occasion to meet her and hoped she would tell me something about herself. She sighed as she moved away to the divan, on which she reclined in graceful movement and then smiled, for it meant a change from her routine.

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Thinking of the strange stories I had been hearing throughout my travels in the Far East, I was not anxious this time to add to the lore. These hard-luck stories grow moth-eaten. But in this case, some sort of ambassador from the subconscious rushed in and told me that hers might be a different tale.

"I am the daughter of a prominent merchant in Madrid. As far back as I can remember I always had expensive tastes and was of a turbulent nature, and though my sister was more modest and retiring, my brother, who was ten years older than I, seemed to have all the vices that man could possess. My parents were heartbroken at his antics. He indulged in all sorts of wild dissipations that my father's wealth enabled him to have. From what I have been able to learn since, he gave women a thought only for what they could contribute to his vicious indulgence, and to the ordinary types and those of the caste to which I now belong," and she smiled as she uttered these words, "he resorted only when the supply of women of his own class had run out. One day, he caught my sister in an unguarded moment and so ferocious was his attack that it actually killed her. My brother left home and country and has never been heard of since.

"I suppose you are wondering why I am telling you about my brother. I do this so that you get a fairly good picture of the undercurrents of my home. Well, I grew up, as you can surmise, in most unusual surroundings. My father grew more stern than even a

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Spanish parent of the old school usually is with children. I brooded and brooded, and due to my own weaknesses, felt terribly handicapped and ill-treated. When I attained the age of twelve—I recall those days so well—I had my lessons at home from a very good-looking young teacher, whose manners were divine. The moments he was absent, especially the nights, were torment. So one day the desire became too strong and I submitted to, or rather, aggressively inspired, liberties from him. He was married, but—I do remember so well now, it was sinful even to kiss in the presence of my family, and how was I to know that what I did was wrong? I had never been told about these things and I knew nothing of the risk of motherhood."

I looked up at the certificate that bore the signature of Monsieur Dubois. I asked myself whether his story had been mere blague.

"Well," she continued, "my father died in an automobile accident in the Pyrenees Mountains and his death left me more free to go about alone, since my mother concerned herself more and more with her own affairs. I went out to dance studios and also to the School of Fine Arts, where I met a young man. Now, mind you, I was bearing the child of my teacher, although I knew nothing of it. One day Juan, the young man, informed me that I was to become a mother and now that my eyes were opened a little, I decided to leave home. And so after four months the baby was born, and died after a few months. Then

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Juan's interest in me waned and I was left, like a ship, to founder. I tried all sorts of things and did not succeed and quite by accident I became a barmaid, but because I could not keep away from men I was dismissed. I condoned myself with the thought that it is very easy for moralists to decry my kind, but they overlook the fact that it is extremely difficult to be virtuous when one is born with strong desires, in which case it is so easy to give—or let me say it this way, it is extremely difficult to say no.

“Somewhat later I accepted the attentions of a man, an Italian. For some months I led a deplorable life. I do not know what it was but this fellow wielded an enormous power over me. So one day he embarked with me under an assumed name for Cadiz and we went to Constantinople. There he took me to a house of prostitution and, unacquainted with the vernacular and customs of the land, and as I had no baggage of any account, he, good Samaritan that he was, supplied me with the necessary clothing and then accompanied me to the police station, where I was registered. This little affair cost me twenty-five pounds, which he again advanced. The madame paid him his money. One morning a Greek money lender visited the house. I borrowed sixty pounds from him to repay her and, besides, a few pounds more, promising to pay him back in three months. But he first deducted his interest, which amounted to eighteen pounds. He then sent me to a shop for my clothing, where he had an account.

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I had to pay exorbitant prices, as I found out much later to my great sorrow. So, in fine, I did not get more than thirty pounds into my hands. When the man came to collect his money, he discovered that I was many pounds short.

"That was easy, he said, so he added another twenty-five per cent for the balance and the madame was so congenial, as she said 'in a spirit of coöperation,' to deduct that from my earnings. But in taking on more men, anxious as I was to make up the amount that I owed, I became less careful. I contracted a disease, which forced me to enter the hospital, for the cost of which I had to borrow again.

"So it came about that I got deeper and deeper in debt and that I got further, or rather deeper and deeper, into the Greek's clutches. And then I met Monsieur Renard who was on his way to Algiers, and ten thousand francs were handed over to the Greek. The same day we set sail for Algiers. . . . Ah, yes, I forget to tell you that I still owed ninety pounds to madame. This Monsieur Renard gladly settled and I became thus in debt to him. I felt at times like an international bill of exchange, being sold from one country to another, from one exchange to another.

"On board the steamer I had to submit to an operation, which was quite painful, the very nature of which was kept a secret, but when it was all over, I was told. Monsieur Dubois, the man to whom I was sold, was unaware of any deception and when his friend the

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doctor had inspected me, he did not waste any time to make sure. And then I was sent over here, where the life is not bad. And where I suppose I shall die. And so, señor, that is my story. If I have sinned, may the Holy Virgin intercede in my behalf. I am certain I feel happier now. I am more than content. Madre de Dios . . . I am very happy, señor, I am quite happy . . ."

A further investigation, a question here, a suggestion there, yielded interesting facts of the congenital antecedents of this girl. It proved a grievous heredity. She professed to knowledge of a drunken uncle, while her grandfather had died in an insane asylum. Her grandmother, being extremely neurotic, had developed a religious fanaticism. A cousin had died by hanging and while there were little discrepancies in her story, there lingered in my mind no vestige of doubt as to the truth of it.

The room where we were seated, I on the bed and she on the sofa, was getting extremely dim, as the oil in the lamps was burning low. I got up, placed a few notes on the table, thanked her for her story, bade her good night and wished her luck.

I then went out into the tropical night, touching my guide's fez as he had fallen asleep.

And I went back to Casablanca, bidding farewell to Bousbir, this white-walled city of women and tea.

I wandered about in the Arab quarters with Mustapha trailing behind. This time there were no invita-

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tions to kronya, and frowns when I refused. This Arab quarter was outside the city in an open field. Attracted by the melodious beat of a drum, I reached a spot where a mob was gathered, while braying donkeys were adding to the general din.

The center of the attraction was a snake charmer. He was surrounded by a host of admirers, boys, youths and older men mainly. The snakes were in a bag and two men had charge of the drum. A third had a stringed instrument which he alternated with a large flute.

Near a small souk could be seen a host of fortune-tellers, quack medicine men and fakirs of all sizes and kinds. On the ground were grand displays of dried lizards and disemboweled snakes and love philters of all sorts and strengths. This sort of thing reminded me of the pasars of Java and Sumatra. It proved again to my satisfaction that, no matter where one roams, a sucker is born every minute.

I was nudged in between a veiled woman and a Senussi, while a native soldier in red fez and red and blue burnoose not only added security but completed an interesting vignette.

The charmer took the half-dead, yard-long snake out of the bag. Then, by way of stimulant, he gave it a prod in the belly, if a snake can be said to have such a thing. Much to his and our sorrow there was no sign of life. The show seemed a complete washout. . . . But the Moslem in true desperation whirled around

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the supine snake, while he and the other fellows, who played the monotonous music, began to pull the hair of their beards. Yet in spite of all that, the snake did not move a muscle; it lay there with unflinching eye. Suddenly the rascal looked at the sky and began to murmur a saadat, or Moslem prayer, expecting help from that direction. . . . Despite this evidence of piety, the snake did not move an inch. Then the rascal had an idea. He explained with solemn mien that Allah, whose incarnation the snake was, was not in very good humor now. His face assumed a weighty and grave expression and he began to mumble an unintelligible formula. But his solemn face assumed a most pleasant smile when the coins started to come down. . . . For, said he, money was wanted; money would do the trick. And then he counted out the spoil and shambled around the magic carpet, with uplifted eyes. And while casting a roving eye about for more suckers, he commenced to pet his beast.

Still no response. Allah apparently was not satisfied yet with the contributions. Allah wanted more coins. And so, not until further money had been thrown in did the reptile begin to start its oscillations. Then the fakir took little one-yard-long Allah in his hairy arms and nursed his little pet as a mother would pet her baby. It coiled around his arm and the fakir shambled around the crowd, purring sweet nothings at the slimy-looking reptile. At times he would gaze almost reverently at the spire of a distant mosque. . . . He ex-

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plained that this was Ramadan (or a Slamatan) and he was going to show the audience, that had responded so well to the call of Allah, that he, the most powerful of all fakirs, wielded an unparalleled power over all beasts of creation.

The snake was carefully placed upon the carpet, while the player of the big drum began to beat it softly.

The snake's eyes, dull and lifeless a little while ago, now shone like precious stones and slowly it began to oscillate its body, while the charmer followed it all around the carpet swaying his white wand. And then came the climax, the uncanny feature of this affair. The fakir stretched out his hand and his foot and the snake began to coil itself upwards around the foot and leg until it reached the fakir's lips. Now the fakir opened his mouth and slowly the snake moved in and slid down the man's throat. The drum was beating with almost monotonous strain. Howls of enthusiasm from the throng. The snake coiled back and down to the ground. This was the end.

I walked back to the bus. The Moslem crescent moon was shining in the black sky, its rays falling over the square. And it was a late hour of the night when I reached the hotel.

"Msa el khir," said Mustapha.

"Aleikum es salaam," was my reply.

SIDI-BEL-ABBÈS

France's Yoshiwara for the Foreign Legion

SIDI-BEL-ABBÈS

France's Yoshiwara for the Foreign Legion

I HAD browsed all day through the city adjoining Sidi-bel-Abbès. The town itself, its history dating back to the Roman occupation, is heavily fortified, its formidable walls giving much needed protection against the onslaught of the wild Berbers of the Hills, the sharp-shooting warriors, who, so it is said, have never been subjugated though defeated many times, even to this day offering stern resistance to French spahis and Zouaves. Tall, thin, strong and well-proportioned men, vindictive and treacherous in the extreme, ignorant as their own animals and yet, with fear in their sullen eyes, they do not even respect the Sultan as their chief.

Here at Sidi-bel-Abbès were Austrians and Russians, adventurous Englishmen and Americans, Dutchmen and Swedes, Germans and Poles; all in red peaked caps, ill-fitting blue jackets and much-too-long red trousers; all masquerading under names that in ninety-nine out of a hundred cases were not their own. . . . Men ruined or disgraced, venturesome and brave, having shamed their families or run away, criminals, mentally deranged, huddled here together as it were in hiding, under the banner of the Foreign Legion, to tramp and slave under the African sun.

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This Foreign Legion had its origin in 1830, when the roughest and toughest and most cosmopolitan band of cutthroats that ever treaded the pavements swarmed over France. They were attracted to the Legion by a spirit of devilry, willing to march to death for the tricolor and have since then earned for this hardened group the distinction of being the toughest and hardest trained outfit in the world.

Sidi-bel-Abbès became the headquarters of a unit. I had often heard stories of the Foreign Legion, the bravest of the armies of the world, and viewed it from afar with somewhat doubtful eyes. It appeared even more fantastic when I talked to these men . . . these men whom the world and fiction writers have made out as demigods or devils, who were always passing through all sorts of miraculous escapades, such as would never befall those outside.

I waded all day through mud, as a heavy rain had set in when I left my hotel. So on a higher convenient spot, near the city, I stood as I watched the Foreign Legion march by in threes, led by an officer.

Tough men they seemed to be, as they peered through the windows of the yellow, sun-beaten walls of the barracks at Sidi-bel-Abbès. Cynical, tight-mouthed men they were, these swashbucklers and soldiers of fortune, rough diamonds, some of them, with hearts of gold, others nothing but gluttonous, godless pigs, pasty-faced, shifty-eyed, snarling blackguards

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from the slums of Berlin, New York, Warsaw, Marseilles and Paris.

And so I watched that riffraff of Society, these men whose life was filled with heartbreaks that their tight lips would not reveal—a life that could tell of body aches and ceaseless toils—of interminable marchings, with heavy packs, that for some would end in madness, suicide or desertion. But whatever they were, whatever their past, about whom and which nobody cared a damn, here they were all the same, bravely engaged on the grand scheme of the *Pénétration Pacifique* of Northern Africa. *Pour la Belle France*.

Later I chose a table at the edge of a clear space on a café's veranda, facing the court. I had no sooner sat down than a légionnaire stopped and asked if he could sit at my table. The place was going full blast. It was an enchanting scene. Garishly dressed mamzelles with soldier companions—higher-in-ranks with their lawful spouses—civilians and natives of high station in life were sipping at their tea, flavored with mint and highly perfumed, and eating delicate pastry and cakes. The air was redolent with the fragrance of flowers, at times marred by the smoke of tobacco. At the side of the café, in the small garden, I beheld the Moroccan floristic delight, the *bougainvillæa*, in all its purple and red beauty.

The man who, as it were, had buttonholed me was

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an American légionnaire, urbane and ruddy-faced. He was puffing at his brier and wanted to talk and I was to be the victim. Unsolicited by me, he began by delivering a tirade against the Legion. He recalled the days when he had enlisted, exactly five years ago, and decried the fact that since the depression all the scum of the earth had joined up.

From across the court came the strumming of gimbris and the pinging of a derbouka and a banjo. A faint voice chanted a tale from the *Arabian Nights*.

We were soon sitting there like long-lost brothers. I do not know what it was in his make-up, but I certainly liked this dapper-looking American légionnaire, back and belly hollowed by five years' slaving.

"What will you have?" I asked him.

"I guess I'll have an export cassis," he answered, in a drawl that left no doubt as to his habitat natalis.

The waiter returned soon enough with the picon I had ordered and his export cassis. He dropped a lump of ice in our glasses, added some water from the siphon and shambled on to another table. We raised our glasses.

"Let's drink to America," he said, "and to the finest Yankee girl that ever crossed the pond." All the time he kept sucking at his pipe, that sent forth clouds of smoke, the like of which I had seldom smelled—the vilest of canteen tobacco. An officer at the next table coughed and spluttered at the stench.

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"Yes," said he, as he waved his pipe with an air of nonchalance, "I am through, thank God, tomorrow. I am going to be married to the best little girl that was ever born in God's own country."

At this moment, two dancing-girls, Drouards, they were, came to regale us with their belly dance.

"These girls, my friend," he said as he pointed at them with his pipe, "well, you know what they are. Most of these girls cater to the soldiers from their encampments which follow the troops."

"Ah, I see. Like the hordes of prostitutes that flocked to all the great European army towns during the World War. I remember they did a gigantic business. But they were also responsible for there being more men in the hospitals then, suffering from venereal disease, than from wounds received in battle."

"You are right. It was an accepted practice of all so-called civilized nations, including our own," he said. "Why, take the Mexican border, for instance. During the mobilization of the United States Army in 1913, men that were there tell me the United States Army had a red light district within reach of every place where troops were quartered. They built a stockade with a hundred separate stalls for the women and they tell me the authorities blocked the church and women's societies, who even applied to the courts, with the theory of 'sexual necessity.' Here the B. M. C. have been created by the military authorities in Northern Africa, wherever soldiers are doing slave duty. Bordels

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Militaires de Campagne they are, or military brothels en route."

"I see. Patterned along the lines of the vivandières of Napoleonic times. They were cooks and carriers of foods, who used to accompany the troops while on the march."

"Yes, and as soon as an army here is about to go en campagne, one of the most important questions confronting the authorities is, what sort of women will these soldiers have while en route? This question becomes the leading one in all the segregated quarters—who will be the fortunate or chosen one to accompany the troops? Soldiers go from house to house and pick the girl. But more often a madame sets out to do recruiting duty among the houses in the Barbary States and she, the patronne, the capitaine of the female troop, remains in charge."

"Well, then, what part do the Drouard women take in the sex life of the troop?"

"Well, I suppose you know what sort of women these nomadic people are. They always have reminded me of the gulls following the ships, feeding on the waste thrown overboard. In the case of the women, they know the movements of the troops and keep on following them wherever they go, on mules and donkeys and whatnot. The soldiers soon found out that the B. M. C., after all, was a great fount of venereal diseases, from which it was difficult to escape sooner or later. It didn't take them long to discover that the

Drouard women were preferable, in spite of their natural ferocity and their strange sexual manners. So, when a troop encamps, the Drouard girls and their masters find it easy to attract the soldiery to their tents. And in the evening when camp life has died down, we hear their singsong, 'come and have kronya,' all along the line. You know what I mean in our palaver. Half an hour of incessant love-making, the time of drinking one cup of tea, and it costs only ten francs. They are not prostitutes in our sense of the word. The system of selling themselves before marriage is an established custom among them, which sounds strange to us who take our own customs as normal and pass moral judgment on strange customs."

"And what does the Drouard youth say about this?" I asked him.

"Not so difficult to explain, sir. For no Drouard lover would ever think of debauching his sweetheart before marriage. He realizes so well that it would decrease her market value and dim her chances of earning her dowry."

"And now, while we have our last drink and call it a day," I said, "are the stories that we hear about the Legion true?"

"You bet it's true that the Legion is tough as hell. And why shouldn't it be? As for the fairy tales, légionnaires are just plain men. Nothing more, nothing less. Tough men, some are swine, and the greatest snarling blackguards that the devil ever sent here.

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For a franc they would sell their own mother. Knights-errant . . . bah . . . cutthroats they are. No greater brigands and scoundrels ever gathered together. And I know, because five years is a long stretch over here," with a suggestion of tragic remorse in his voice. "It is exactly five years since I stepped into the office of the Bureau Militaire, in the Rue St. Dominique." He took another drink.

"It isn't worth it, sir. I'd rather rot in an American prison or anywhere else, as far as that goes, than join up again to pick the chestnuts out of the fire pour la Belle France, at twenty-five centimes per day. No, siree. Me for God's country and my girl. Thanks for the drinks. I'll see you here tomorrow morning. I'll have breakfast here, if I may, with you, in civies."

He rose. He squared his broad shoulders and, staggering slightly, swung across the court and disappeared from sight.

At the flush of the morning sun on the minaret, Henderson, because that was the name of the American légionnaire, joined me on the porch of the hotel. A different person he looked. He was in civies and his was a figure well calculated to charm any woman's fancy.

On my insistence, he told me his story:

"My name is not Henderson and the place, where I was born I shall call Dobbsville. My people were poor and respectable folk, and they managed to send me to college. The father of a girl that I had known all my

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life was president of one of the banks. And when I came back I courted her in secret as she thought that their one and only daughter would marry the son of a retired butcher would surely have killed them. Her brother had been my school chum and as long as I can remember, he was always hanging around pool rooms. I guess the boys stuck around him because he had plenty of money.

"One day I applied for a job in the bank and much to my surprise I got it. I am almost certain that her father did not know that I had been selected. Marge and I got secretly engaged and were to get married, the moment that I had bettered my position or had secured a place elsewhere.

"One evening, just before balancing day, I remembered that I had forgotten something and I did not want the accountants to find a mistake in my accounts. So I left Harry, Marge's brother, in front of a pool room, and mentioned to him casually that I had to go back to the bank and probably would join him later.

"Being bonded, I had the keys. When I entered the bank, I heard the telephone ringing. I hurried to one of the desks wondering who would call at such an hour. It was Harry, who had called to tell me that he was leaving the pool parlor with two of his cronies to go to Banessville, a few miles away. He just wanted to tell me so that I would not come to the parlor for nothing.

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"I left a few minutes later. Coming out of the bank I ran into the watchman, who bade me goodnight. He said a few words about the cold spell and then I hurried on, anxious to get home.

"You can imagine my surprise then the next morning when I found the bank in an uproar. A burglary had occurred during the night and police and authorities, together with the officers of the bank, were going over the books to see how much had been stolen. The burglars had forced an entrance through the rear of the bank and, what seemed strange, they had been thoroughly conversant with the combination of the lock of the safe.

"I felt the eyes of all the employees focused on me and I was called to the office of the president. While I could answer his questions satisfactorily, I sensed that a doubt lingered in his mind. I was told to go home but to hold myself ready at any time to answer questions.

"The thought obsessed me that everyone in the bank was pointing his finger at me and it seemed as if all the people I passed on the street looked at me and were talking about me. I arrived home in a nervous state and at night I left, having tried desperately to get in touch with Marge. Every time I called, I was told she was not home and I could not leave my name. Well, I left for a seaport and after a week or so managed to sail aboard a freighter to France. Later on, I learned that the home papers were filled with accounts

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of the robbery and my sudden disappearance established my guilt.

"In Bordeaux one morning as I wandered aimlessly through the streets, I went into a café to have a drink. Two men, one an American, sat near me and I overheard their conversation. I introduced myself to the men, to make the story short, the three of us joined the Legion together. We were shipped from Marseilles to Africa. I have been here now exactly five years.

"Two years ago—no, one year and eleven months to be exact—reinforcements were sent to us, as we had lost considerable of our men. You can imagine my surprise, when in the column that was fighting that night alongside ours, I saw my former chum, Harry, in légionnaire uniform. You could have knocked me dead. It was days before we had a chance to talk while at rest between fighting.

"His sister had been heartbroken at my having left without saying good-bye. The culprits had never been caught. . . . My father and mother had never given up hope of seeing their son return. . . . How had he got into the Legion? Well, he would never tell. Like true légionnaires, that was our personal business.

"We were in many scraps together. Once he saved my life. The fighting was not very far from Marrakesh. I was caught by the throat, and could almost feel the steel of a knife on my flesh, when I heard a voice, 'Lead the way, sergeant,' and a légionnaire came

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lurching out of the nowhere. There was a struggle and a muzzle of a rifle crashed on the skull of a Riff. He went down like a bag of salt. With fixed bayonets we drove the Riffs before us. From that day on, Harry and I fought in the same bataillon.

"Another time I helped him out of a predicament. We had been in a heavy encounter and he had been taken prisoner by a band of Berbers and taken to the Hills.

"I volunteered to get a searching party together to venture into the Berber stronghold, to try to save him and the others from the sure death that awaits all those who fall into their hands. Word had come that Harry had been taken to the chiefs and there was no time to be lost in effecting a rescue if he was to be saved from torture by the Berber women.

"I secured the aid of a Berber girl, with whom Harry had been quite friendly. We moved at once. I changed into native clothing, a patched and tattered jellabia and a handful of dirty rags. I twisted a turban about my head, beneath my eyes I rubbed a little soot from a charcoal pot. I swathed myself in a robe of immaculate whiteness and put white stockings on my feet. And thus attired, I was ready to set out for the lair of the Berber fanatics, with half a bataillon of Senegalese tirailleurs, some colonial infantry, some chasseurs and a bataillon of the Foreign legion, and even a machine gun section, you know, the one com-

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plete with orderlies, cooks, clerks, cyclists and whatnot. And then there was the girl—ready to make a dash for the Ksar of the Berber.”

Henderson hitched himself around in his chair, snapped his fingers at a waiter and ordered an export cassis, and a soda for me.

“Well, the girl was game and she had received a nice sum of money, so she could marry. We reached the Oasis Mahor before daybreak. And alone, she and I, we set out, she leading the way on foot, over a flat and stony plain.

“I stayed behind when we reached the hills. She promised to return. And true as we are sitting here, she came back before the setting of the moon. The men were safe, she said, and she had secured from the chief the right, as is their custom, to torture or to kill outright. She promised me she would wait three days and keep the men in her tent. I was back with the troops within a night and a day. We allowed the girl to flee with the chief, for services rendered, and our guns, superior military organization and swift horses gave us easy victory over spear and bow and gun of the tribes.

“Harry was saved. And then the Berbers came back in larger numbers than before and their onslaught was terrific. Our Senegalese, good fighters that they are, were roused to fighting fury and they followed our mounted. The slaughter was great and in that encoun-

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ter Harry was shot. I was near the spot where he fell. I dragged him to a place of safety and stayed with him until he died.

"He begged me to write a confession so that he could sign it, and he kept asking forgiveness. He, together with some cronies, had robbed his father's bank. He had tried to make amends and had written his sister from here, telling her the true facts and where we could be reached.

"Three months later, I received letters from home. From mother, saying how proud she was of me, and a few words from my father, hoping I would soon return home. A letter from Marge, too, and of all things, a letter from her father. I could not believe my eyes. He told me to come home and I would find a position there in the bank, waiting for me.

"And then, six weeks ago, I was summoned to the captain of my company. He's a sour-faced man, with a moth-eaten mustache, and as crabby and cranky as only a Legion officer can be.

" 'Henderson!' he barked.

" 'Yes, mon capitain,' I replied, and waited for him to continue. He cleared his throat . . . as he stood with one hand on his chair.

" 'By the . . . er . . . you have been a good légionnaire,' he said.

" 'Oui, mon capitain,' I replied. I'll be darned if I knew what it was all about.

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"'Well, er . . . two more months to go for you. I believe your name has been mentioned for bravery . . . saving the life of a fellow soldat under fire . . . hmmmm . . . I suppose you will forget the harsh things that I have said to you at times?'"

"'Oui, mon capitain.' And then he yanked the thing wide open and came to the point, almost shouting what had taken minutes for him to get around to.

"'Your fiancée has arrived from your country. She is here in Sidi-bel Abbès. You'd better take two days off. Allons, allez avec toi!' and he strode out the door so suddenly that he nearly overturned the sentry in the corridor.

"'Well, I needed no other word. In my haste I fell over a number of bidons, that also stood like sentries in the corridor.'"

"'And so we're getting married. Yes, sir.'"

I had watched now, for almost an hour, as I stood on a bridge over the Mekarra River, which overlooked the playground of the légionnaires, a picturesque Arabian village, with the cemetery, where Jew and Catholic are buried peacefully together, at the other end. This place at Sidi-bel-Abbès was the quarter segregated by the French, who must have a proper time and place for each emotion, for the pleasures, at certain hours, of the troops.

I had come here at an early hour. My guide had

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high hopes of gain for showing me the streets that were the favorites with the légionnaires when their pockets were filled with coins saved from their twenty-five centimes per day and their hopes were high of finding on the Rue Mansard, Rue Verte and Rue d'Ambulance (so-called from the many squabbles and the bloodshed that caused the ambulance to be called at all hours of the night) their favorite or the girl of their dreams.

Near me on the bridge stood a Zouave, urging me to go down and visit the quarter. I would enjoy it, he said. My guide joined in the gossip in his familiar manner. The Zouave shouted to the girls, who were sprawled at ease in front of their one-room houses; "Hein, regardez vous, ici un amoureux Américain avec beaucoup d'argent," while he made a motion with his hand. This led to repartee and in a short time a grand conversation ensued between us on the bridge and the girls in the quarter, in which the girls' and my merits were freely discussed.

We wandered down through the badly paved streets, which were dusty, and where youngsters whose parentage might be in doubt were carousing and galloping up and down. In front of the small one-room houses, actually in the dust, were the scantily dressed filles de joie, foreign and indigenous. Every house was a brothel. The doors were closed as the actual hour of business, the hour of kronya, had not arrived.

The women were smoking, shouting quips at passers-

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by and chaffing each other, while Moorish women, their servants, were doing cleaning duty.

The légionnaires had not left their barracks. Men of the law and military police strutted by in their familiar posture and shouted howdo's at familiar faces. Peals of laughter burst out between them. Much of what they shouted I could not understand, as it was mingled with the harsh titter and gargling undertones of some of the natives. But I made out that many of them, in their halos of their gaudy headdresses, in the splendor of some of their poses, lasciviously stretched out in the dust, were making delicate disclosures of the adventures in the night just past.

I paused for a moment at the entrance of the structure in which the girls are inspected by officials in whom is vested control of this quarter. Inside the structure were a number of women, while outside a line was forming, waiting until those inside the place had been examined.

Just as I entered, to be received there by an official, two girls were led away by a civilian and a member of the police force. I was told that they had been found contaminated, although a week before they had been perfectly healthy.

At the far end of the room, which was surprisingly large, sat an officer, with a tremendous mustache, astride a chair. He had his arms folded across the back. His was a bony, flat-cheeked face with a pug nose, red from absinthe or grog. He spoke in a hard

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dry voice, which at times bit like acid into my brain. One of his assistants spoke in an undertone, as he handed back the grimy cards.

I passed the doctors, who at the moment were examining one of the girls, while the official was bending over the record, when one of the girls standing in line, a better business woman apparently than the rest of them, slipped into my hand a card containing her address, while she spoke a few words in French. She wanted to clinch the affair.

The girls are allowed to leave the district whenever they please, provided they are found free of social diseases, and have received a pass. This might be considered a good example of medical stupidity, since the best doctors in the world have found it an impossibility to diagnose to an infinitesimal degree, whether the gonorrhea or syphilis bacilli are absent. A cursory examination is the only protection the authorities provide against the transmission of disease.

The sound of the bugle broke my none too pleasant reverie as I stood watching the inspection. This bugle call had its meaning . . . it was the signal for the girls to have their quarters and work benches ready for the coming onslaughts of the légionnaires.

When I left, I instructed my boy to take me through the Rue d'Ambulance, as well as to the Rue Verte and the Rue Mansard.

A Drouard woman, arrayed in all the colors of the rainbow, with gold coins around her neck, the light

shining through her garments from behind and, etching her profile, attracted my attention. Her breasts stuck out like pomegranates and her limbs were straight and pretty. When I set eyes on this girl, I suspected that her posture had been concocted with true precision for my benefit or for tourists who might straggle in these parts. One had to take into consideration that the constant parading of pleasure-seeking légionnaires added a certain stimulus to this trade, and its practices, but there was something about this Drouard woman that intrigued me. She had a way of soliciting that was different. No mistake about that.

Later I returned to the quarter. On seeing me the Drouard girl greeted me with a slow smile and she chattered a few words which I could not grasp, but the motions she made were eloquent. They told their tale. We entered the cubicle. I began by declining the kronya. But I invited her to dance instead, a thing that all Drouard women can do and thus on discovering that her tender smiles were out of place and that her bold innuendoes were futile, she quickly disrobed and commenced to move on her toes. She made sure in advance that the coin was laid on the bed.

In dancing she barely raised her toes from the ground and most of the movement was below the hips. In her hands she held a silk handkerchief, which fluttered while her hands made various patterns. She jerked her head back suddenly and danced with the muscles of her neck while her breasts rippled and

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swayed and moved as the ripples of a lake. I was amazed at the muscular discipline she displayed. Each movement of neck, breast, hips and limbs was a detailed part of a finished whole. And the most amazing thing was that she did all this without accompaniment of music. As the dance went on it became indescribably alluring.

The midnight philosopher who coined the phrase that the flesh is weak was right after all. At times it had become too much for my Nordic blood.

Twilight had come over the city of Sidi-bel-Abbès when I returned to it. Harem women appeared on the roofs. It was the women's hour to enjoy the African night air and their gossip too. And so everywhere unveiled women appeared on the roofs of the houses.

In the street, Arabian men were cooking, the smells of meat and of green peppers fighting for culinary supremacy. Others were listening to the story-teller, a bearded Arab, graceful in gesture, who, to add emphasis to his tale, began by beating a small gourd drum. I decided to stop for a moment. This scene was familiar to me. Dozens of times I had listened in the Indies to this man's counterpart.

The audience was large and could for hours sit there and listen to stories, many of which they may probably have listened to dozens of times. From what I could gather, the stories here told of successful carnage against the Spanish invaders with a smattering of *Arabian Nights* tales. I left this gathering as the

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story-teller directed a quip at someone in the audience and I passed a wall—there were no eyes: no door, no windows. I heard a woman's voice singing in French. It sounded so strange. A rapacious wretch, a Levantine asked for alms.

My guide slowed up his pace and stopped in front of a native restaurant and asked for baksheesh. When I handed him a coin he grabbed hold of some of the meatballs that were frying there and that smelled exceedingly good. The rhythmic noise made by the man, who with a long cleaver was chopping his meat, reminded me at the moment of the clicking of the East Indian rice pounding.

I observed a turbaned muezzin circling the high pinnacle of a mosque and I decided to enter. After removing my shoes and the leather belt that I wore, I passed the two omnipresent Moslem columns which are a test of character, for it is said that whoever can squeeze between them is certain of Paradise and must be a good Moslem. I fear that when this test was inaugurated all good Moslems must have been very lean, and that I will never get to Paradise.

Worshippers were at prayer, bowing their heads at the moment toward Mecca in silent unison. They were seated in circles on the floor, reading the Koran. Their shoes were placed in the center of each circle. A venerable Arab, their leader, was squatted before a low desk. All mumbled.

The interior of the mosque itself was impressive,

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columns and arches and domes, and the subdued light added to its charm. As my eyes became more accustomed to the dimness I spotted some old mosaics and Arab inscriptions on three great arches, written in characters many yards long, spelling out names of the companions of the Prophet. The actual prayer niche, the mihrab, was placed at one side of the apse and in the direction of Mecca and the rest of the church was built to conform to it.

And here I lingered and regained peace and a reminder of some of the beauty and splendor of Morocco, without which the sordid and evil byways of the voyage would have been hardly endurable.

MARSEILLES

L'Aiglon L——, White Slave Hunter

MARSEILLES

L'Aiglon L——, White Slave Hunter

A SMALL and primitive embarcadère, the only tie that still existed between Africa and France and on which huddled together were the representatives of Asia, Africa and Europe, permitted us to board the ship that in twenty-four hours would land us in Marseilles.

Three blasts and very soon the hull of the comfortable Holland vessel was seized by the waves.

Mustapha Supérieure, the village quarter of Algiers proper, and Africa's coast line, with capes and low hills, faded out of the lilac mists. Far in the distance of a slowly paling sky raced tiny white clouds. The air blew softly, carrying jumbled noises from the shore.

In another day, we were approaching the coast of France. The sea, at this early hour, scintillated with thousands of tiny stars and crests, as they appeared and disappeared again on the slope of larger waves. The winds were blowing stronger and tore mildly through the rigging, while even the lifeboats, as if mocking King Neptune, were rocking for a while.

The active wind set a strong swell against our ship, causing a pronounced roll which resulted in a meager

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attendance at the breakfast table. The sky became lighter and lighter as the sun, throwing its first rays over the horizon, heralded a new day.

A few hours more brought us well within sight of Marseilles, the great gateway unique among the cities of France. Marseilles, founded by Phœnicians from Asia Minor, long before Christ taught in Calilee, is a survival of Greek, Roman, Frank and Byzantine. It was occupied by men of Carthage in 535 B.C. but was recaptured when the Marseillais became masters of the sea again.

These Marseillais founded their colonies all along the Mediterranean, invoking the aid of Rome against hostile tribes, until in the year 49 B.C. they were besieged by Cæsar again.

Marseilles, known of old as Lakydon, and finally retained after centuries of wars for control, signifies to a Marseillais the epitome of his national existence. It is the medulla oblongata of the French of the South. The population is an extremely dark one. No, I should say a dark-complexioned one. The people are exuberant in nature and pleasure loving. A true Marseillais is hardly distinguishable from the Italian or Spaniard and presents an entirely different physical appearance from the rest of the people of France. In his blood is that of the Catalonian Spaniard, the Corsican and the natives of Sicily, Italy and Greece, Armenia, Kabylia, Tunisia and Morocco. It makes this strange city a hybrid.

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Now, as we approach the city, on what turned out to be a brilliant sunny day, plowing our way through the azure blue of the Mediterranean, we passed the Château d'If on the port side, actually two miles away from the Vieux-Port. Château d'If, immortalized by Alexandre Dumas in *The Count of Monte Cristo*, was built in 1529 as the State Prison. We passed the neighboring islets of Ratonneau and Pomègues, held together like Siamese twins, and reached quarantine, where with the rest of the incoming vessels we rode at anchor at the Port du Frioul.

An odd sensation flicked through my heart, as I studied the old place. The air was balmy and delightful. For once there was no mistral. A soft sun, and an almost exotic aroma of the port that I have always liked, exerted their exhilarating influence.

On the port bow towered the Church of Notre-Dame de la Garde, the Church of the Pilgrims, from her lofty pinnacle on a fortified summit, on a hill south of the harbor, bidding us a hearty welcome. This colossal structure, a sanctuary of the Middle Ages, done up in neo-Byzantine style, with a statue of the Holy Virgin in the tower, was beacon and savior and boon to seafaring men.

As we moved on again, we passed between the two lighthouses, while ahead was the Vieux-Port, with its bassins, or docks, of seventy acres. All around us I could see the sails of innumerable small craft, many of them lateen-rigged piratical boats with narrow prows

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and conventional ornamentations; white and brown in color, flashing against the blue.

As we cut down our speed, our Dutch captain, an experienced old salt, deftly maneuvered the vessel into the Bassin of Joliette. I spotted the Abbaye de Saint Victor on our right, and away beyond the limestone hills I beheld the lofty white tops of the Alpes Maritimes, while the well-known Corniche Road, like a dusty white ribbon, wound itself around the cliffs, towards Nice and Monte Carlo, where, if we are to believe the Marseillais, the Riviera has its start.

We slipped firmly into the dock, grappling the French shore with strong cables. We had arrived at the principal harbor of France, the fourth in volume of tonnage in all of Europe, and the most wicked port, so it is said, in all the world.

Monsieur L—— of the Paris Sûreté Générale had come to Marseilles on official business, he told me.

L—— was one of those quick-change personalities, as a servant of the French secret service really has to be. He was not so suave as most Frenchmen are; indeed, he was somewhat rough in manner, hirsute, fastidious, and cultured. He spoke seven foreign languages with painful precision. And what distinguished this interesting Frenchman from others of his calling that I know was the quality of his mind. It was clear and luminous to the extreme; he had a horror of affectation and pedantry, and like most Frenchmen he had

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a capacity for eloquence. Besides, he was a glib wit and had a warm and expansive sense of humor.

He was bland and untroubled in the face of the anger and hatred that the underworld of Marseilles and Paris had for him. For it was he who spread havoc and terror among the white slavers of the Continent and it was he who put the impress of the seriousness of the job on the League of Nations. He spread the fame and name of the Sûreté Générale near and far and he did much to unravel the sinister white slave plots that burrowed underground in Paris.

We chatted as we strolled along one of Marseilles' famous thoroughfares, the Cannebière. His name was l'Aiglon L—— (Eaglet L——). How fitting an appellation!

I expressed a desire to know something of the circumstances that brought him to Marseilles.

"Eh bien, monsieur," so he began, "there exists a great vice syndicate that makes millions of francs out of the exploitation of French and foreign women in France and also in other parts of the Continent. Soaring have been the efforts of the ring that to cope with the situation it had been made the subject of a clean-up by the special branch of the Sûreté, working in coöperation with the same branch of Scotland Yard in London as well as with other international social bodies.

"Convictions of recent date have brought to light some startling figures, and we now have an insight into

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the huge traffic that exists in French women who are shipped to other lands. They have revealed the existence of an organization whose far-flung interests reach an astounding figure. To combat it, since the drug and the white slave traffic are cleverly intertwined businesses, the League of Nations has inaugurated a Drug Black List. This is a sort of Rogues' Gallery, in which the leading suspects are entered. Arrangements have been completed at Geneva through which a similar gallery of white slavers, the International Rogues' Gallery of White Slavers, Touts, Procurers and Sou-teneurs, has been installed.

"A close scrutiny of the list has already shown great duplication. The League, monsieur, regardless of all the criticisms that have been flung at it, has really done splendid work. After thirteen years of patient grinding in all parts of the world, it has become harder now for traffickers to operate. I do not believe the traffic will be stamped out. But I do believe that by educational measures and by the newly enacted International Laws, to which most civilized nations are the signatories, it will become more and more difficult for these rogues."

"Do these traffickers keep in touch with each other, monsieur?"

"Mais oui, they congregate at regular clubs, where they are kept au courant as to the market, the prospect of trade in various countries. Here opportunities are canvassed and introductions given. They are kept in-

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formed as to the fluctuations in the rate of exchange, also as to where there is likely to be a demand and where the inhabitants have plenty of money to spend.

"In addition they keep well informed as to the places where traffic can be done without serious interference from regulations, and keep posted as to the politicians, in each particular section, to whom they can apply in case help is needed.

"Cardiff is one clearing house of the white slave traders, while Marseilles is the center of the white slave business in France, and despite the unrelenting efforts of the police, the bordellos here are merely training grounds for the new fodder."

"Who controls the traffic, monsieur?" I interrupted him.

"Mainly those of alien birth—English, or even Levantine gangs," he replied. "These gangs quite cleverly circumvent all endeavors to end the immorality and white slavery.

"It is not difficult at all to find plenty of scoundrels who, for a price, are quite willing to marry the women. All danger that they be given away is quickly removed since they never see these week-end wives again, for they are shipped posthaste to other countries. It is very easy, mon ami, for a couple or a woman to leave a French port for England, for instance, on week-end tickets, or to make journeys to other countries, and to sell the return half of the tickets to the white slave syndicate. It is this return ticket that enables the

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slaver to import his women, without having to submit to the usual passport examination and regulations.

"The little business that I came to Marseilles for is to try to get a little English girl, and send her back to England where she belongs.

"The victims are easily found. A woman decoy follows a girl into a café and takes a seat next to her at the same table. It is not hard then to begin conversation. The woman finds out whether the girl lives at home, and the nature of her occupation. If she lives in lodgings, she is a good prospect.

"In this particular instance, she had lived in a lodging house. She was flattered and told that with her good looks she should make much more money. A promising job was held out to her, and even the prospect of lending her some money for which she would not have to do a stitch of work would have done the trick. And even if she had not fallen so easily, a simple letter to her employer with an anonymous accusation would have been all that was necessary.

"It was then that the decoy, or in this case, we believe, a procurer, decided that she should finish her training in France, where after all, so she may have pointed out to her, the center of all art is located. Now that is what actually must have happened to the girl we are after, for in French cafés she will be looked over by foreign traffickers.

"We received a telegram from the Amies de la Jeune Fille at Marseilles, that a girl answering this

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description has been seen. And in order to find her and also to get my claws on the skunk who enticed her away, I have come to the port. Voilà!"

We penetrated the Cannebière until we reached the quarter, around the port where at least seven hundred houses of assignation, including some of the most famous brothels in all of Europe, are the finishing schools for many of the greenhorns in the traffic.

"This section," confided L——, as we continued our jaunt along the ultimate fringe of the waterfront, "is one of the most dangerous areas in Marseilles. Murderers, footpads, burglars and hoodlums prowl the street in great numbers. It is not safe to go through here alone at night, for here their depredations are carried on with utter boldness. Even the police have to take their beats in twos and often in greater numbers when out for an arrest.

"I would not care to take you around this part after dusk, unless garbed in stevedore attire or the like. And while modern Marseilles is clean and progressive and quite a lovely city, the waterfront of Marseilles, along the bassins, around the Quais du Port, the Rue Dumas, Beauveau or Suffren, gives shelter to the dregs of the world. Then Marseilles becomes Port Said, Singapore, Barcelona and Sydney combined.

We passed by innumerable alleyways and larger thoroughfares that were thronged with brothels, saloons and houses catering, so it seemed, exclusively to

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sailors. The lowest sort of these, where we stopped and looked in, seemed to harbor only one or at the most two women. In one place only did we see four or five very old birds, painted and gaudy, infirm wrecks, who, so I thought, must for quite a long time have given up any hope of pleasing the younger men and now tried to cater to those sailors who were too drunk to know the difference. There were many such in the Rue Dumarsais, sitting in *deshabille* on wooden benches, toothless old hags, whose past lives must have been of constant dissipation. As the houses grew better in this street, the women improved too, they became younger and more pleasant to look at, ranging from fourteen to eighteen years of age and wearing extremely gaudy costumes.

Theirs was a life of saturnalian amusements, in which the period of jollity had no particular ending. They were on the job from morning to night and from night to morning.

The dress they wore seemed to have been especially made to accentuate their charms. For it split right in front, the first of its kind I had ever seen; when they sat down it opened, leaving little to the imagination.

In the Rue Suffren, some of the places that L—— was anxious to honor with a visit were merely tourist shockers, probably dressed up for their edification. We had to reach them through subterranean passages, providing for the sightseer additional "local color." They

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were dimly lighted alcoves and occasionally we could see some individuals slink back in their obscurity.

The girls in these parts were doing a thriving business. And here were the sideshows contrived for the benefit of tourists, and for Americans in particular. The girls here were the true aristocrats of the trade, handsome and petite and young and well dressed, immeasurably superior in appearance to the streetwalkers along the *Cannepière*. Many were, so said L—, from the provinces and had been brought here by pimps and procurers, who had an arrangement with the house, by which they participated in the earnings, demanding and receiving an itemized statement every month.

One of the girls, a chestnut-haired harlot, with straight and shapely limbs, was doing a nice country business. The bartender of the place, whose dove she apparently was, and who certainly looked like an evil bird, shambled over to our table and began to give us the lowdown on the girl.

"Hein, monsieur," said he, and he slobbered when he laughed, his natural kinky hair reeking with cheap scents that polluted the place, "Charlotte is well liked. There is nothing, monsieur, that she won't do for a hundred franc note. Hence she is much in demand." He had installed for her use a sort of guest book, a visitors' book, in which one could write one's name, and the day and the hour on which one would like to taste of her.

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"Once relationship is established! messieurs," as he rolled his mean eyes and twisted his waxed mustache, "all will be well and easy hereafter."

If Charlotte could have overheard this eulogy by her historian, Lord knows what she might have done. For Charlotte had a temper. Charlotte *was* in demand. One could easily see that. Three times she disappeared from view. Sixty customers was her record for a day, as she told us herself with an air of pride. Charlotte had one standard rate, ten francs top. The other girls in the dive were mere five franc girls. And she intended to maintain her ten franc rate as long as she retained her good looks and her breasts were still firm.

And so we left the place and Charlotte, whom one could almost like with a convivial sort of affection for her frank views on her trade.

In one of the places, where we whiled away some time, the girls were working for the men they kept. When we were there one of those birds had come to cash in on his investment. His face was expressionless and exhaled an odor of evil; he was well dressed and mustached. Between the performances, at which the girls sang vulgarly suggestive songs, these pimps went over to the tables of the men who frequented the place.

After ordering a bottle of vin, they would tenderly lead the client, egged on by the girl, into a small alcove found on the second floor.

And over all this the management stood watch with

apparent interest, waiting for the golden opportunity of despoilment that in dozens of cases, they knew, would come. If the sailors had swallowed enough booze to make them unconscious or silly, the moment for action had arrived.

For Albert, the heavy bartender, who had been watching over the proceedings, argus-eyed, had the love potion, the famous Marseilles knockout drop all ready for the "simps." A potion, filled with cantharides or Spanish fly and for which the place was renowned, made the sailors pliable and hopelessly drunk. And then the moment for the grand finale, that of ruthless despoilment had come. Good for the girl, good for the pimp, good for the house. For they split three ways.

Next we investigated the Rue Morte (the street of the dead), a well-chosen name. We entered one se-raglio, softly illuminated, with the bar at the extreme end of the room, while quaint tinkling notes came from an electric piano. On a huge dais the manageress of the place, a hard, well-proportioned woman, swathed in a Parisian décolleté gown, seemed to enjoy the bacchanalia she provided. On both sides of the bar were narrow passages, with dozens of booths from which issued pretty waitresses, in short skirts and silk stockings, with their upper bodies bare, stalking like Balinese goddesses, coming and going with trays of drinks.

"You see for yourself," said L——, as we left the house in the Rue Morte, "the sordid side of Marseilles

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and it is so in Paris too; not so cleverly concealed as, for instance, the underground places in your American cities. We know for a fact that in Marseilles proper there are more than 30,000 registered scarlet women, while there are hundreds of temples devoted to a commercial Cupid. And each ship that leaves this side of the Mediterranean, carries its contingent of girls to do slave duty somewhere, in Asia, Africa or the Americas. After all, monsieur, it makes no difference how things are done. Whether they be the open hotbeds of Paris or Marseilles, or the underground pipes of your New York or Chicago, they are all the same."

"Where are the girls who come from Africa?" I asked him, as we continued our journey of exploration through slumland, to the darker and even more dangerous alleys, where a panorama of colored types shuffled past. Indian and Lascar, Tunisian and Moor, swarthy blacks just off their ships, swaggering, gabbling loudly in strange dialects and hurrying as if nothing else mattered, to the seraglios and bars.

"Quite a number of Algerian and Tunisian prostitutes are in Marseilles proper," he answered. "Some of them are only eight or nine years old. The Arabian quarter is changing, however, since the underground connection between the port and the Etang de Berre is completed. For on the other side of the Etang de Berre is the Camargue, where the African harlots now sell their wares. This Camargue is famed for three things: mosquitoes, wild horses, and salt fed cattle.

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Ah, yes, I should also add, for the annual gypsy pilgrimage on May 24 to Sainte-Marie, to the tomb of King Sara. And every four years, the gypsies, coming in droves from all corners of the globe, elect their queen at Sainte-Marie. The festival is one of the most remarkable of events in Europe.

"And what a region this Camargue happens to be—a lonely, savage, God-forsaken place, with thousands and thousands of head of wild cattle and horses of Arabian strain, roaming there to their hearts' content. And there one finds French cowboys, the only cowboys, as Americans know them, in all of Europe.

"Now let's come back to the story. The price of the Tunisian and Algerian girls is standard, two francs being the limit. Not much, you will admit, barely allowing the girls to eke out an existence. Yet, after all, they do not last long, since disease and early death soon exact their toll."

"But how is it possible, at such figures, for a procurer to make profit on his investment?"

"Nothing easier than that. Two hundred francs is the usual price paid by the procurer when he obtains the girl in Algiers or Morocco. She sells her body on an average of twenty times a day, which makes forty francs for her man. From this he pays her ten francs. And since these girls come of a stock that generally is healthy, well, if she is able to escape disease, she is able to earn, in a seven-day week, an easy two hundred francs per week for him. Exceptional beauty will bring

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her impresario a much larger sum,⁶ in which case she is taken to a larger house. It is easy to see that in three weeks' time she becomes clear profit."

A conversation with a souteneur in one of the places we visited in the slum quarter, was illuminative. He said: "Agents start for the colonies, across the pond, in search of supplies. Some sort of working arrangement has been entered into with men in Africa. As soon as word is sent out through these subterranean channels that a house needs supplies, a traveler sets on his way and contacts with his agent in either Algiers or Morocco. His agent in turn proceeds to the raiders in the hills, and, accompanied by a sufficient number of rogues heavily armed and supplied with plenty of cash, the needed number of girls are obtained with least difficulty. Of course, many of them never reach France, if the vigilance of the authorities is too strict, even for us, and they are sent to do slave duty in the segregated quarters of Morocco or Algeria. Where in former years the girls would be disposed of by the raiders at slave markets, a substitute has been found in the men who visit the tribes in the hills and the plains, for they start an active bidding for girls that have been captured from other tribes and held for ransom. They, in turn, sell their slaves to capitalists, financiers and speculators in property, who directly or indirectly operate houses of sin. In short, it is capital that controls, no matter where one goes."

It was impossible for us to obtain statistics from this

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captain of industry or to get any idea as to the money involved in this trade.

As I run over my notes now, I recall that he informed us also that Marseilles and Frankfurt-am-Main and Berlin especially vie with one another for supremacy in the manufacture and the sale of obscene postcards, and that British and Americans come to purchase them. He knew of twenty-six manufacturers in Marseilles alone, while since the Nazi régime the influx of Berlin-made postcards had gone up by leaps and bounds. German traveling salesmen canvass the trade and, besides their regular line of merchandise, carry a choice of especially unusual photographic records.

Before we left this fellow, who knew more about this business than any expert of the League of Nations that I have met, I asked him if it is true that prostitutes of Roumanian nationality are flooding European cities. Yes, it is true, he said. The Roumanian government made the prostitutes and the inmates of licensed houses deposit a portion of their earnings in a savings bank, allowing them to withdraw it only with government approval. So there exists a wide scheme of passport and savings bank forgeries in Roumania that enable girls to leave whenever they so desire. A large number of Roumanian girls from Szernowitz, traveling via the Polish Corridor route to all parts of the world, have come to Marseilles.

"Why, monsieur," said he, "next door with Madame Colbert there are six Roumanian girls working for one

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man and doing exceedingly well too." He finished in a matter-of-fact tone and regarded me in friendly fashion, as if he were letting me in on an important secret.

"Everyone coming to Marseilles eats bouillabaisse at least once during his stay," Monsieur L—— remarked, just as we were ready to hit the hay. And in order that I might enjoy this dish at its best and in true comfort, he promised to call for me the next morning and give me a culinary treat.

Now every man has his penchants for foods—what man has not? Monsieur L——'s great weakness was fish and mine is sourkraut mixed with potatoes. So bouillabaisse it was going to be. Although I must confess that in spite of all my previous visits to Marseilles I had never been able to say that I had become a bouillabaisse devotee.

L—— was on time. And for one hour and a half we sat on the porch while he, the old connoisseur, the bouillabaisse-hound to whom food was like nothing else on earth, went into rhapsodies in trying to initiate me into the whys and wherefores of the subtle excellences of a dish that, according to him, could be compared for tastiness with the finest Lucullan feast.

Now I must confess that at first I was mildly bored, unable to see how a man, the best secret service man France has produced, could become so goofy over a kettle of fish, but as he progressed and waxed more

eloquent, I, who had listened at first with only half an ear, gradually became enchanted by his wonderful fish story.

We then took a drive past the Botanical Gardens to the Corniche, where we stopped for a short drink at the Reserve, a restaurant from the veranda of which we were afforded a delightful view of the bay. Then, after seeing the bassins again, we came back to the Vieux-Port, by the Quai du Port, and, for auld lang syne took an apéritif at the Café Mistral on the Quai de la Fraternité, where much to my surprise I was to be waited on by an old acquaintance; the last time I saw him, he served me in the Brevoort in New York—good old Kipperino, whose huge red nose makes him resemble Cyrano de Bergerac.

The apéritifs were indeed good for we were soon strolling arm in arm like old friends along the Cannebière and the Cours Bésance and waxing more eloquent as the apéritifs became more plentiful, we arrived at last at the Café Isnard, where night and day are alike, for an extraordinary animation exists here twenty-four hours of the day.

* We decided to sit down for another apéritif. After all, what is one apéritif more or less between friends, especially since we were about to embark on the consuming of bouillabaisse.

"Now, mon ami," said L——, "it all depends how you like this bouillabaisse. It depends, a great deal, on the chef's state of mind and also on the place where

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it is eaten. There are many restaurants in Marseilles that serve this delectable food. Why, whether you go to the Reserve, where from the shaded terrace one gets a lovely view of the Bay of the Bonne Veine and where one gets one's bouillabaisse, as the Marseillais says, as one would get it 'chez eux,' which means as at home, or whether you want to eat it at l'Estarège, and where the bon bourgeois and his wife and mother-in-law have their nice kettle of fish and where the fish is just freshly brought in from the sea, or at the Mistral, a little more gilded and also a little more gay than those cafés, where a table-d'hôte with half a bottle of wine will wash away the bouillabaisse in very short order, or whether you try Basso on the Quai des Belges, or Pascal on the Place Thiers, or here in Isnard, in the Rue Thubaneau and Rue Recollettes, or whether you eat it at home, monsieur . . . it is not the same bouillabaisse."

I should say right here that one could see Monsieur L—— was truly in earnest and wanted to do the best he could for me. So Isnard it was and Isnard it was going to be.

And up came the gérant and the chef and the garçon and the chasseur and the headwaiter and the assistant waiter and the sommelier, all running to and fro, elated at the thought of their new bouillabaisse captives.

So we began with coquillages and hors-d'œuvre as a foundation, and at last Monsieur L—— reached his ambition in his desire to initiate me, as he urged

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me to dig into what looked to me as a plate of fish stew.

As I placed my fork and knife in this fish conglomerate, the *gérant*, the headwaiter, and the *chasseur* with carafe of water in his hand, stood near our table with bated breath, lest they lose one little move or expression of ecstatic delight. I ate valiantly, as one should do in such a case and I was extremely nervous, for I did not want to make a *faux pas*. I kept on eating and chewing but what I actually ate I really did not know at that particular moment.

"Bouillabaisse must be eaten slowly, monsieur," L—— mumbled to me, with his mouth filled with fish and bone. When he caught his breath and came up for air again, he added, "with caution and intelligence."

I ate on and it is simply amazing what one can find in bouillabaisse, aside from the garlic and the saffron, that after all were the only ingredients I could recognize. I turned the stew over a dozen times, looking for things that I thought looked familiar. At last I gave up in despair and decided to eat on and on, sacrificing myself to more bones in this stew than there could have been in a whale and, besides, it had a penetrating effluvium.

And so, when I had recovered my equilibrium sufficiently and had disentangled myself from bone and from fish, I grunted the reply for which the whole hotel apparently had waited, that it was "*épatant—delightful.*"

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But I breathed a sigh of relief when the entrecôte, grillé au cresson with pommes mâcaires, was brought up from the rear and now fought for first place. And when the last sip of wine tried its best to wash away the garlic and saffron, Monsieur L——, to show he was a true sport, suggested we try another method of bouillabaisse tomorrow. I decided, however, that one such dish was enough for me for the rest of my life.

And I add here with candor that in the matter of eating the world-renowned bouillabaisse I am but a carpenter and as a gourmet I surely do lack all the finesse and culinary appreciation that the Marseillais must possess.

L—— had his business to attend to and we decided to meet in Paris, a week from that day where . . . he promised me bouillabaisse!

PARIS

The Maisons of the Champs-Élysées

PARIS

The Maisons of the Champs-Élysées

FRENCH morality is more of a social than an individual force. What would be regarded elsewhere as a vice would to the Frenchman appear merely as a social irregularity. French society is directly opposed to the thought that cultural and educational standards demand from every person the same sexual behavior. It is safe to say that French morality derives from a social instinct. And as the result of the development of this instinct, while prostitution in Paris might be examined as part of a general scientific study, the French system of prostitution and licensed houses, either governmental or private, is in the Frenchman's opinion a purely domestic matter.

Back of this system we find abhorrence on the part of the Frenchman to sanction a condition by which humanity would be compulsorily deprived of personal rights, even though such deprivation might be for the benefit of the community.

This is, in short, the chief moral philosophy back of the French system. The inmates of the maisons de passe, the houses, the rendez-vous and the bordellos are the victims of lopsided economic systems and

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backed by the principle that nothing is gained for French morality by being hostile to the prostitute.

Prostitution in France is regarded as belonging to that deep-rooted sphere of human impulses to which police ordinances can mean but little. It is related to economics and, since so much has to be changed in the entire social system to secure even an approximate abolition of prostitution, it must be accepted as it is.

In the old days, the French laws against sexual and religious offenses were severe and involved even death at the stake as the penalty. Police authorities were active and their methods elaborate, yet withal they failed, as they fail today, to suppress immorality. The antiquated ecclesiastical laws were remolded in the days of the French Revolution, by which *Vox Populi* assumed authority, in such a way that they conformed more to the enlightened ideas of the average fair-minded modern man. All the ancient laws against immorality were done away with and replaced by Napoleon's Code Pénal. This code was in full accordance with the deeply rooted instincts of the French people, basically avoiding any interference with the private life and the freedom of the individual. Prostitution was then considered a criminal act only when it became a public act whereby it might annoy others.

This Penal Code still remains in force. Many other countries have patterned their social laws after the French model. The only country that can be said to have gone even further than France in its attitude

towards the prostitute is Great Britain, fostered undoubtedly by the Englishman's traditional emphasis on personal freedom. Nowhere in the world is the prostitute so free to exercise her profession and nowhere is public opinion so intolerant of even the suspicion of a mistake, even by the police authorities, in the exercise of their duties, as among the people of England. Also, the Englishman feels, and quite correctly, that interference with these women means regulation of the system. And regulation of the system would look very much like official recognition. And such a state of affairs would be decidedly repellent to the English people at large.

The situation in France, however, while equally tolerant of individual freedom, is somewhat differently managed. The Frenchman feels, and quite correctly, that society always has done its share in creating the prostitute and therefore is morally obligated and responsible for the system that rules and regulates her life. The arm of the French system that controls the amatory business in all its ramifications is known by the well-sounding name of the *Police des Mœurs* (the *Morals Police*).

Under the *Système des Mœurs* there are two distinct policies of operation: regulation of the traffic and abolition of regulation. The first submits the traffic to certain stringent regulations. It admits it is a nuisance, yet one that cannot be eradicated and for health and decency has laid down some rules and regulations

for the Police des Mœurs to enforce. The second policy tries to abolish the regulations that in their futility fail to achieve their purpose. This group feels that regulation forms, as it were, a partnership with vice. Which incidentally brings to my mind a witty aphorism in one of Rémy de Gourmont's dialogues, which reads: "Quand la morale triomphe il se passe des choses très vilaines; (When morality triumphs there come to pass some very villainous things.)"

So much for the thought behind and the moral side of the French *Système des Mœurs*. Now for the other side of the picture—that of regulation, and in Paris this is a regular business.

The licensed houses, registration and medical examination come under control of the different municipalities but are under the general direction of the Ministry of the Interior, which guarantees, in some measure, a certain uniformity of individual procedure.

The authorities do not interfere systematically unless there is a scandal. The proprietress or madame of a brothel or *maison de passe* is specifically warned of the precarious tenure of her privilege, which will terminate in case of abuse or scandal or infraction of the regulations. She pledges herself to enforce the police regulations, to respect the hours during which the inmates and boarders, being merely registered women, may patrol the streets. She also pledges herself to provide the inspectors with prompt information regarding unusual occurrences. The *girls en carte*, or

registered workers, or inmates of these bordellos, in turn pledge themselves that they will not solicit at windows. Neither can they decline to put themselves at the disposal of any customer who may desire them, whatever his condition.

The Agents des Mœurs make frequent tours of *inspection*, many of these calls being more of a *social* nature. These officials, like officials the world over, demand their pound of flesh. The madame in many cases is an influential person who stands in well with the Officier de la Paix or even with the Chef of the Division of the Sûreté, hence she knows she has little to fear if she gets caught in irregularities.

Registration in Paris is voluntary, yet really compulsory. The registered girl may dwell in a brothel or not, just as she pleases. She also may leave her name and address (somewhat conforming to our own American call-house girls) with the keeper of an authorized rendez-vous, to which she may be summoned whenever a client calls. This sort of house in Paris, while widely distributed, is thickest in Montmartre, in certain well-known districts, such as the left bank of the Seine, in the Avenue Victor Hugo, and particularly in the Étoile, the fashionable districts around the Arc de Triomphe.

Now if we scrutinize the regulations of registration, we learn that the girl en carte is a chattel of the police, as it were, and is always liable to arrest. On the main thoroughfares, a certain number of prostitutes can be

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seen strolling during accustomed hours . . . in the intervals of patrolling the streets, the women can be found in cafés, restaurants, variety theaters, where they are for the most part as little aggressive as when parading the streets. A glance, really, is all. A half-whispered invitation and a smile are usual preliminaries, rarely carried any further, unless the response is encouraging, when they become somewhat bolder in their importuning.

Only late at night will a girl become more aggressive and sometimes provocative. This depends entirely on the pressure of the police, as it relaxes or increases. For the girls en carte are not allowed to solicit on the boulevards after eleven o'clock. They are allowed to transact their business on the streets only from seven to eleven at night. Other rules are the ones whereby they are obliged to show their medical inspection cards whenever requested by the Agents des Mœurs. They are not allowed to solicit on main streets. About side streets nothing is said. They are not allowed to be attired in an offensive manner. Not to speak to minors or to men accompanied by women and children. It forbids them to trail their pimps and they are not allowed near churches, schools and railway stations. Nor are they allowed to live with other prostitutes or with their lovers.

These regulations may account for the great number of rooms being advertised and for the great number of foreign language teaching that is offered, also for

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the large number of private dressmaking parlors and the music lessons given by sweet damosels, who to a great extent are nothing but cocottes and who know very little about piano playing, and also may account for the cigar and cigarette parlors which may be opened with special police permit and will not be disturbed so long as they comply with the police regulations and pay a tribute in graft and license.

Since the girls en carte are always liable to arrest, they more often decide to become filles à maison (inmates of brothels) thereby avoiding inspection and personal entanglements, becoming the responsibility of the madame of the brothel.

While there may be six or seven thousand prostitutes registered in Paris alone (girls under twenty-one cannot be registered and they have to be of French nationality) with about 300 known maisons de rendez-vous and 80 maisons de tolérance or tolerated houses, the number of clandestine women walking the primrose path reaches the high figure of 60,000, which, according to well-certified authorities, includes regulars, promiscuous married women, and the steadily growing class of "respectable" girls who set as the price for their favors nothing but a good time.

The police authorities estimate that over sixty per cent of the women who ply the trade support pimps, by virtue of a tie that is psychological and difficult to comprehend.

And now we come to the I.I.O.P., the Independent

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and International Order of Pimps—procurers and souteneurs, which in plying its foul trade meets with little interference on the part of the French. This may have given rise to the common assumption that the *métier* of *souteneur* is a French institution—spreading from France to other world markets where the traffic exists.

It is no criminal offense in France for a man to live on a woman's clandestine or immoral earnings. The relationship, therefore, between the *cocotte* and the *souteneur*, or the *cocotte* and her boy friend, for whom she pimps, is not regarded by them as open prostitution. The girls merely work for the boys.

There is still another aspect of the Paris problem. Investigation has shown that irregular sex intercourse on the part of the male is practically universal on the Continent, and in Paris especially. More and more institutions are found all over Paris where women have no access. These men cannot be punished as criminals unless a party to the acts agrees to become the accuser. This is seldom done. Not only is it technically impossible to discover whether a specific act is one of prostitution or immorality, but no one proposes to treat mere immorality as a crime. And in so far as women perverts are concerned, there are in the French capital many so-called Lesbians whose needs have been capitalized through houses of accommodation.

So we see some of the reasons why many a traveler to Paris gets imbued with the idea that the French standard of morality is a low one. This is as erroneous

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a view as the impression that Frenchmen and Europeans at large have of America's institutions. Much of the diversion provided is at the suggestion of foreign pleasure seekers in Paris.

Naturally the Parisians live a sinful life of their own to some extent, but not one that would place them on the same plane with the seekers that come to Paris from the outside, and countries that have maintained systems of regulation consider the French system the best under existing conditions.

I had been sitting in front of the Café de la Paix and had watched that ceaseless motion on the boulevard, so characteristic of the French. Even the chasseurs of the café, serving a whole block around, were continually on the go, while messenger boys bounded and skipped through an endless traffic. Two Frenchmen, who were sipping their Byrrh or amer picon, also seemed in constant motion, their eyes, their eyebrows, their lips. There were speed and vivacity wherever one looked. Taxi horns emitted their nervous peep-peep, while the crowds on the half mile of pavement between the Madeleine and the corner of the Rue de Richelieu gossiped and gesticulated as they passed in review.

This was Paris, of the chestnut blossoms, with its stalls on the quais and its brioches and coffee, and the Halles with its onion soup. This Paris that belonged to the French and the world, to the cocottes, the midinettes and the grisettes.

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While waiting for a friend from the Lazare, the venerable prison for infected girls, we sipped our apéritifs and glanced over the papers. Intermittently L—— would salute familiar faces, among whom were many womenfolk. L'Aiglon L—— knew his "oats"—and his women too. And why shouldn't he know? He was a member of the illustrious service, the *Police des Mœurs*, which brought him in close contact with them all.

Newsies yelled the evening edition of the *Presse*, *Intransigeant* and *Liberté*, others again offered the American edition of the *Paris-Times*, the *Chicago-News* and the *Herald Tribune*.

The glitter of electric signs and large numbers of electric advertisements in kiosks and shops mocked the stars.

Soon the boulevard became suffused with the rich beams of the moon, whose light scattered over the tops of the many trees. And the boulevard seemed almost deserted, at times, save for the Madeleine-Bastille bus, filled to capacity, rushing past, some merrymakers and countless taxis bearing their boisterous loads hither and thither, and the gendarmes patrolling, two by two, in their extremely comical, yet familiar strut.

Dark forms of girls darted from various corners and received whispered hallos from boulevard Don Juans.

We left our chairs as the electric lights became fewer

and fewer and then died out. With one eye open, as it were, the good old boulevard had gone to sleep.

"Let's hail a cab, mon ami. I suppose something must have happened for my friend to have disappointed me. Some extra work must have detained him at the prison." A taxi stopped, "Abbaye de Thélème—Place Pigalle," L—— directed the cabby, and when we had started, he said, "You will perhaps learn things of interest without him."

The first impression of the Abbaye was one of gorgeously dressed women, and frantic bandsmen blowing blasts of red-hot music through an atmosphere so concentrated that I could cut it with the headhunter blade that I possess.

Having secured a seat, bowed to one of his many acquaintances, he turned to me and told me that the Abbaye is one of the best known cabarets in Paris, and is also a hotbed of poules and cocottes and souteneurs. It is one of the oldest of its kind on the hill. Formerly it was the studio of one Roybet, a painter of heroic and martial subjects. When Roybet breathed his last, after a strenuous life, an enterprising restaurateur acquired the place. This fellow was endowed with a decided literary inclination for none other than Rabelais inspired him to choose the name of Abbaye de Thélème, called the Abbaye for short.

"This requires some explanation, monsieur," L—— added, "for most people associate the place with some

mysterious abbey and many patrons labor under the misapprehension that they are sipping their fizz in the former refectory of this mythical abbey. But the old dogs who manage this place do not mind that a bit. Instead, they relish the idea that the public at large links the place with abbots and monks and, good managers that they are, capitalize on this hyperbolic flight of the public's imagination."

Red-coated, Hungarian fiddlers with glossy hair and silken mustaches began to render a gypsy strain, with which they thrilled the soul and inspired the spirit, or in other words, thrilled the body and inspired the legs.

A dainty, almost childlike girl, with delicate oval face and drooping baby mouth and finely modeled Grecian nose, her hair piled in shiny curves, came over to our table, accompanied by her friend. She was introduced to me as Fifi and her man was Etienne, a professional dancer. He was a most important functionary at the Court of King Jazz, that loomed big in the night world of La Ville Lumière.

It was plain to see that Fifi adored thir pompadoured boy and from the cut of his suit and the Sulka tie he wore, he seemed quite an expensive luxury to keep. I wondered how many men this Fifi had to have to keep this Prince Charming in clothes.

As the atmosphere became more intimate, with the champagne bubbling in our glasses, L—— confided to me that Fifi's boy friend was a Russian officer in the former Imperial Guard. His true name was Vasile-

vitch and he belonged to that heterogeneous group of Russians that had been hurled by the gigantic Russian volcano of the Revolution into Paris and other cities, where they hoped money would be plentiful.

"After all, monsieur, you have your goodly share in New York, too, of this affliction, together with the other numerous retainers in disguise of Princesses and Counts and musicians, caviar, volga boatmen, vodka, and what have you," he chuckled.

As wine grew more plentiful, decorum melted like wax and the crowd at our table chattered like birds. L—— drew my attention to a tall, good-looking, middle-aged man, with dark hair and keen eyes.

"He is Albert LaPlage, of Le Milieu, and he is one of the most active members of a gang of white slavers, which in the Orient is headed by Quong Yik, a Chinaman and also by a halfcaste, named Smith. This Milieu, monsieur, is an organization that has its representatives in almost every port of this earth. Some men claim that it is in league with the police and public men." L—— relaxed, lighting a fresh Golofino and motioning a waiter to fill up the glasses.

"They deal in all sorts of social outcasts, they are rats, but they possess many qualifications, for they have to be lovers, teachers, experts in sex and also hygienic matters. Their jobs are not easy by any means, for they have to look after their women day and night. They have to master them, sometimes even beat them for disobedience and teach them when they are igno-

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rant, for after all an ignorant woman is a drug on their market. They must show the girl how to dress effectively and acquaint her with the most effective methods. It is their business to decide to which market she should be shipped: to South America the buxom, fat ones—with sizable hips and well-shaped breasts; for the Orient, any woman will do, so long as she is white.

"Here he comes now," said L——, half rising to greet LaPlage, who, in checked suit, seemed in perfect poise with the world. LaPlage shook hands with the girls and L—— and then sat down.

I was most anxious to get his story. But the chances seemed utterly remote, as he was reticent and extremely guarded in his conversation. A soubrette, a blue light flashing from her hair, began a shrill song in falsetto voice that was very disturbing and which made the flow of our conversation even more difficult.

"Is fortune smiling, Monsieur LaPlage?" L—— inquired, in a matter-of-fact voice, his teeth shining bright in a most captivating smile.

"Yes," came the answer, "I certainly have had plenty of luck lately. I did a good stroke of business that made me a nice little pile."

"Isn't that grand! You are clever, LaPlage, you are hard to beat." L—— turned to me. "Monsieur LaPlage is engaged in a trade that is exceedingly difficult. We are sort of jealous of his success at times and make it hard for him to operate, don't we, Monsieur La-

Plage?" he added in a serene voice. "He has been in the racket a long time. I suppose he is the most married man on the Continent." And then he engaged his victim in a species of maddening conversation, giving him barely time to interject his brief answers to L—'s swift badinage.

"Who again, was your first victim, LaPlage? Ah yes! I remember, Madame Larousse, in the Rue Lepic. A red-haired woman! She now runs a brothel.

"What you say? You were her first amour! On the road together?

"No? Sweet on her yourself!

"Well, that is not so strange. You are just the type. You have to fall some time. You cannot deceive all the women all the time. You have to be caught once yourself.

"A paying business, you say?

"You don't have to tell me, I know.

"Dangerous, you say?

"Thanks for the compliment. It is pleasant to know you do not underestimate the work of the Sûreté."

By this time LaPlage had become stand-offish, yet L— took him off his high horse in short order and the game was resumed with renewed vigor.

"You have a nice girl here, Monsieur LaPlage. Had her long?

"Two months. That is nice. Working well, I suppose?

"A little lazy, you say. That is really too bad. But

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after all, you can afford to be generous. Live and let live is a good motto."

LaPlage fumed, and became restless. He seemed anxious to go. L—— offered him a fresh cigar. The waiter poured drinks.

"What happened to the girl you once obtained in a cinema?" L—— began once more.

"What one do you refer to?"

"The one that your assistant doped, you know the one I mean."

LaPlage was silent. He stared at L—— and lit his cigar.

"Ah, yes, I remember," said L——. "You promised to do a friend of yours a favor. He was anxious to secure a blond girl and promised no doubt to pay you two thousand francs. So you worked a cinema. Your woman helper took a seat beside a girl who was alone, and young and blond. As the show progressed, she jerked the needle of a hypodermic, that she carried with her, into the leg of the girl, who gave a short cry, believing that she had merely pricked herself with a pin. The girl was hardly able to get up, but with the aid of the woman, who professed to be her aunt, she left her seat. When she reached the foyer, the girl collapsed. That is where you came into the picture and with a couple of ushers, you carried her to a taxi. The rest was easy I am sure.

"You delivered her to your man the next day. You had broken her in yourself and she was so ashamed at

what had happened to her that she would have flown to India, if she could. The easiest stroke of business you ever pulled. No trouble at all. She is today doing very well and wise to all the tricks of the trade. She works Le Royal, you know the place of Messieurs Morand and Massard, and occasionally, when they are very busy, Le Caron or Pigall. How is that for the story you won't tell us?

"A great life this, Monsieur LaPlage," L—— went on, "you see we have a good idea of your activities.

"You permit me, monsieur," he said in his most suave manner, "that I relate to monsieur another experience in which you were involved and that nearly made you an involuntary guest of the *hotel* (prison).

"Well, then, in this case, the latest device for abducting the girl and forcing her into the Milieu was brought into practice. I admit, LaPlage, it was ingenious and extremely difficult to counter. The agent was a common nighthawk taxicab man, stationed outside the Gare Saint-Lazare. Like a good hawk that this cabby was, he waited for his prey, until his eye fell on a girl emerging from the station who hesitated as she reached the pavement. His experience marked her, a stranger, unaccustomed to Paris, so he whirled up and secured her for a fare. Very ingeniously, in order to discover whether she was worth trying to trap, he drove in a direction just opposite to the one he was asked to take. Since there came no expostulation he was sure that his deductions were correct. The

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girl was as good as lost. It was easy. Is that not so, Monsieur LaPlage?"

LaPlage nodded sullenly and looked away.

"Well, to make a long story short . . . the cab ran into much quieter streets and now began to travel fast, arriving at last in a slum area. The girl became alarmed and tapped on the window, but the driver assured her that all was right. Suddenly they turned into a blind alley at high speed and came upon what seemed the doors of a closed garage, which slid open as the car ran into darkness and closed again.

Another girl for the Milieu! But this time, just as they were about to prepare her for the market, two Agents des Mœurs, followed by a band of agents of the Sûreté, beat upon the place. The girl was liberated and our friend here, so I have been told," as he winked at Monsieur LaPlage, "was the man who escaped in the nick of time.

"You are married, are you not, Monsieur LaPlage?" L—— went on mercilessly. What grand fortune. Who is the lucky girl? She must be extremely happy to be married to a successful man like you.

"Ah, I see. A marriage of convenience. Emancipates the woman from control. Very ingenious of you to have thought of that.

"What you say? You have other girls working for you. What a large income you must have. Ah, I see. You do intend to ship them to Buenos Aires. On a theatrical contract. Sure, I understand. Fake as a

rubber dollar bill. Each ship for Las Americas carries its contingent of fresh slaves," he explained to me.

A waiter at this moment came over to our table, bowed to Albert LaPlage and whispered to Fifi: "There is a gentleman at the table over there, mademoiselle, who would like you to join him in a bottle of vin."

"Tell him I am engaged," Fifi replied curtly. The waiter leaned over and whispered something to Albert.

"Mais, Fifi," said Albert, "he is an English lord and with plenty of shekels." Fifi now turned on Albert in a rage.

"Fiche moi la paix, you and your lords. Je ne suis pas Américaine."

"Tomorrow evening," said L——, as we departed, "I have planned a visit to a spot where we will find more enticing company."

We dined at the Couteau in the Avenue d'Orléans, where the food was excellent. We were a long time over our bisque d'homard, foie de volaille en brochette, aubergine and galette Normandie, and I should not forget the Evêque, and the Clos de Vougeot and the fin with the coffee.

Then we looked in for a moment at Maxim's in the Rue Royale where a galaxy of harpies were gathered at the bar, and we took a short stroll up the leafy

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Champs-Élysées, formerly the home of the wealthy and now the bailiwick of trade de luxe. We progressed on to the Arc de Triomphe, as we were expected somewhere in the Etoile.

L—— stopped in a side street, a stone's throw from the arch, where rendez-vous and brothel and maison de passe were clustered cosily together. The place we entered was luxurious to the point of sumptuousness.

Though the night was young, Parisians and foreigners alike had already their fling. Men and women in one large room were lolling on couches, while in another room they were dancing in feigned drunken revelry. They seemed to be getting the utmost out of a cavorting that ultimately must end in one of the rooms on the second floor.

The manageress of this place was an extremely beefy madame, with carmined face and bleached hair and tremendous breasts.

A door stood ajar. On peeking in I beheld a couple. The girl, a heavily built wench, with turned up nose and a twinkle in her eyes, unceremoniously bade me come in and make myself at home. The man, unconcerned, was totally oblivious of my presence. On the wall were two posters that attracted my attention. One read: "Come again, if you like it, but not more than once for twenty francs." On another, which was even more illustrative: "Dogs not allowed here. So do not bite."

Just before I closed the door behind me, apologiz-

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ing for the intrusion, the girl's stark, pale face, grinned at me . . . as she blew me a kiss.

Another room of the house was set aside for the Virgin peep show—the Voyeurs—peepholes cleverly placed here and there at man's height, from which places of vantage one could look one's fill. Forty francs was the fee we paid. The girl inside showed graceful curves of the hip, the thigh and beautiful legs. At times she sought to protect her breasts, whose nipples were gilded, from the gaze of men. A shrill cry from the girl and the show could go on.

We wandered into a hall that was reserved for the dance and sat down at a table, where a servant brought drinks. Here the preliminaries went on under the rosy and glittering lights with men and women all around with that enforced gaiety and hard smiles. Musicians were breaking into a stuttering brazen whine while the trombone player raised his instrument to his lips as a magician might raise his wand. They scared away the silence that had threatened the gaiety at moments. There were women with bobbed hair—pale face. Others were carmied almost to distraction. There were flushed girls in their teens; women of thirty-five and older dressed as débutantes, and there were even two portly looking grandmas with low-cut dresses, and young chaperons, hostesses, painted and powdered like Borneo sacrificial totem poles . . . looking like sophisticated babies and pursuing their dance, and ogling and classifying every male comer.

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We entered another part of the bordello, which was baroque, pleasing in every way to the eyes, with its warm walls of a wine-red color, and a modern bar that would have done justice to the old New York speakies. A woman, her small slender feet clad in black sandals, crisscrossed with straps of gold, looked at us with half-shut eyes. Suddenly the dim light flowed in upon her and revealed her beauty and delicate lines, her burnished black hair drawn tightly back, leaving her pretty ears visible as pretty ears should be.

We heard a word spoken behind her, a short low word, and then a second form emerged from the gloom. This one was a woman too. She was boyish and slender, her hair flaxen and blond, cut and cropped close to her lovely head. She moved lightly upon the heels of dainty red shoes. In each shoe an emerald buckle gleamed as she set her feet forward. She said to the other one, loud enough for us to hear, "Over at last." They exchanged enigmatic smiles, as the other nodded and glanced down at the blond childish face that looked up to her. Then they moved farther into the light and I saw on the shoulder of the black-haired woman the rich fresh crimson imprint of a lipsticked mouth. . . .

A hand fell upon my shoulder . . . I turned. In the door behind me stood L——. His teeth flashed in a delightful grin. He held out his hand. In it was a mask of black silk. I took it; he had one too. In the excitement that was almost feverish, he deftly adjusted

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the cloth to his face, the eyes shining eagerly through the slits, his red mouth laughing through another.

In the dressing alcove, we removed our clothes. . . .

We had accepted the madame's invitation to visit a house next door that was connected with the one we were in by a passage. At its end was a small, well-lighted room, empty at the moment, and we continued our voyage of exploration until we came to a door. We heard feet shuffling near the door and the sound of voices coming closer. We paused at a heavy doorway, over which a portière had been hung. The door opened and at first it seemed completely dark and silent. We heard secret rustles in this darkness and there were hidden forms that we could not see. It came as an anticlimax after the glamour of the place we had just left. Only dim sounds reached us from the Champs-Élysées.

We heard a passionate whisper, a question put hotly in the darkness of the room, a secret rustle for an answer . . . a touch and answer of white warring thighs. I heard a woman's voice say, "Il y a encore du temps" (There is yet time). I heard the answer whispered, spoken tenderly in a murmur so low that it was almost hidden from me by the noise that came again stronger from the place next door.

At this moment there came a signal—that sounded in a remote corner of the huge hall, a strain of music, that came deep and sonorous, harsh and even tempest-

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tuous to the blood. . . . The strain of the music died again while we stood hidden in a dark hanging. Again the music cried out its summons and we turned to the other half shut door, near where we stood. The horn shouted out. A last wild voluptuous outburst, a clarion call that invaded our hearts and filled them with savage anxiety and desire, too remote from all others to give it a name.

"Are you sorry you came?" L—— whispered.

I shook my head as my fingers fumbled at the cord of my mask. A violin began to play and three times its trembling voice sped out over the chamber. And then a deep horn, low and loud, like the foghorn of a ship passing in a mist at sea, joined in the tenderness of the strings and the pulse of its rhythm. Three times they rose in stirring crescendo, drawing out in a wild clamor the march and countermarch of a dance beyond experience. And then the marshaled outcry of the trombone mingled in furtive melodious approach. A trap drum clicked and clanged into notes of pleasure and then passed almost into anguish.

I turned, I saw the two beautiful ones standing there, hand in hand, their faces hidden by masks—with golden symbols painted on them. On one side of the black-haired woman's mask there was a young moon, with the old moon in her arms . . . on the other side there was a swan, a bird of plumage sailing in grace and beauty upon the lake at night and above the gleaming figures; her eyes shone too, gleaming in the

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new darkness of the mask. They looked at the other end of the chamber, where, through an aperture or little doorway that seemed to lead into another space, music was pouring forth in glowing wildness . . . passing from statelier measures of the horns to a new song, wherein the shrill calling of the violin seemed to burst into an orgiastic outbreak of maddening sound.

We filed into the room, masks covering our faces, and we came upon eleven men and nine girls, black masks covering their eyes, lounging about the well-appointed salon. Some were talking . . . others were dancing. The violinist, a scrawny long-haired little man, was playing, while on a bench near the piano sat a beautiful girl with bobbed hair.

There was a sense of forced unconcern among those present. One girl sat in a deep armchair, half attempting to hide herself with her arms, while she giggled at times about some silly nonsense that a bronzed young athlete, who leaned against the piano watching the dancers, was telling her.

A Senegalese maid, in all her blackness, brought a drink that we gratefully gulped down. Other men came in at this time, greeting the assemblage with waves of their hands—all clad as we were with masks and shining pumps. They stood around unconcernedly, chatting idly amidst the blast of the music. Easy to see, however, that the excitement was at times too much for them, despite their efforts to achieve nonchalance.

I heard some noise behind me. I turned around.

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Women were there, having come in by another door. They were superb in form and gratefulness and stood unashamed in a row before a blaze of rich yellow that revealed all that had been hidden before by the gloom of the other room. Over each face the dark mask fell. The music ceased. Eagerly I scanned the mysterious, lovely forms and I saw the sweet head of the blonde and the dark eyes of her companion.

The music started again. There was another round of drinks and there was more dancing. Presently a young man whispered something to his partner. She flushed . . . nodded and they left, with arms entwined. Their exit, apparently unnoticed by the rest, had become a part of the routine and other couples went out from time to time.

I saw a girl step forward, hesitating. She stopped and looked at her companions; instantly the music began again . . . filling the great high room with magnificent melody. A woman's voice cried out in the storm of sound. The girls now moved forward a step or two and then the men came to meet them.

A waltz rang clear and swift, giving to the tender, sentimental music a savagery and an impulse that hardly ever existed in the phrases before me. I now saw L—— advance to the upheld arms of a woman whose auburn curls were so magnificent that in their splendor they outshone the beauty of her long white legs. L—— winked at me and then they moved away eagerly. They stood for a moment, and then went

slowly into the dance. One by one the women were caught up and were floated away into the shadows of the room. I was still alone. When the last of the others had swayed from the bright space there, I saw before me the sweet form of the slender boyish blonde, who moved into my arms.

"How do you like this place?" she whispered. "Don't you think it exquisite?" she asked me in good unadulterated American. "Boston was never like this," she chuckled. "If the folks home could see me now. O boy!" And as we danced, she continued: "We are perfectly free here. It takes one a little while to get used to it but after a while one does not notice it any more. It really does not seem to matter."

"Hm," said I, as I happened to lower my gaze from her eyes, which twinkled and mocked and laughed from behind her mask. Even the manicured toenails did not escape my notice. We soon broke through the ice that led to friendliness and then we danced on. The bright light decreased and another, moonlike in quality, flowered over us. She clung closely to me in the dance and never spoke. Only her arms and her speaking eyes . . . they said unutterable things.

We stopped for a moment, as a negro woman appeared again before us with a small tray with glasses of wine. . . . We drank swiftly together.

Wicked laughter now began to rise among the women. I saw their arms fly up as they turned and turned in the dance and I saw the eyes of the men burn-

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ing under their masks. L—— turned slowly in the step and I saw the woman, whom he clasped, touch the mouth of his mask and hold her mouth against it as they moved in the tangle of gleaming bodies and tossing heads.

We danced on and on. One by one the women went by, not looking, not caring, lifting up masked faces in laughter that rang shriller and shriller, lifting up eyes that blazed silently, lashed into frenzy by the melodious rhythmic beat of the orchestra, as they went through the smooth figures of the dance.

At a window, strangely enough, just getting a glimpse of the lights of the Champs-Élysées and the buildings around there, we stopped and stood together, talking. Suddenly I saw L—— of the Service des Mœurs, and his partner go by us, hesitate and turn, with backward laughter, as they stood for a moment in the doorway and then enter an alcove, not minding that the half-drawn draperies did not conceal them.

I heard the click of heels. The sweet odor of ravishing perfumes arose and mingled with the fragrant air. Even the breath of the woman in my arms, as we danced again, was honey flavored.

The drums roared and the trombone sobbed faster. A woman shouted, and I saw the man she danced with grasp her by the shoulders, lifting her clear above his head. He gazed up at her arched body . . . and carried her away.

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Voices now resounded from all around. Drunkenness was in the air. American, French, German and Italian voices resounded in the electrically charged atmosphere. Women raved. One slipped to the floor and lay there sobbing.

My dancer did not drink but it was to be an orgiastic night.

A day or so later L—— and I were admiring the true beauty of Paris, as we stood in the flowering square before the Louvre, with the bright tulip-bordered paths of the Tuileries and the fountains in the foreground and shining through the verdure a soft flash of marble statuary and often a glint of green and gold. Dozens of tiny tots and even larger children were merrily sailing their boats on the round lake in the center. To one side was the upward trail of the Champs-Élysées stretching like a huge ribbon to the Arc de Triomphe and beyond was the Place de la Concorde, its obelisk and fountains never tiring of letting go forth their jets of spray.

"Paris is truly the dream of our dreams," said L—— with an expansive gesture of the hand. "It is like a young woman, endowed by nature with beautiful breasts. It is sleeping a young girl's dream in a layer of sweet smelling robes. Where, monsieur, will you get the same majestic mansions, the same fringe of trees in leaf and the same sparkling tingle in the air as we are having here on this beautiful morning? And

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these beautiful ladies, these faultlessly attired men and all these bewitching youths?

“And tell me, where will you get those sidewalk smiles, monsieur, as from these Parisian women, that are merely friendly gestures, condoned by that wonderful air of informality that is so totally absent with you in America? Just smile at a girl here, monsieur! She will smile back, instead of running to the nearest policeman. Still your American men do not hesitate for a moment to smile at our pretty midinettes or grisettes as they trip up the avenue.” Paris, monsieur, is not snobbish, at least, not the sort of snobbishness that exists in your own country.”

“That reminds me,” L—— continued. “What do you think will happen to Paris or, as far as that goes, to all of Europe’s pleasure founts, now that their greatest benefactors, the Americans, the expatriés and the tourists have dropped out, due to the rise of exchange? That place the other night—it derived its success from the foreigner, as no Frenchman would have started such an establishment for his countrymen in the first place. A striking example of deliberate business organization, mon ami. And you may find such places everywhere you go in Paris. In the Rue Pigalle, for instance, you will find a dance hall, a café and a house of assignation; a plant under one management and all doing a thriving business. What do you think will happen, now that the American exodus has started the other way?”

"I suppose the places here will get along," I replied. "They always have and they always will. Some places may close. But then, some places ought to close. There were too many of them. I feel sorry for the women though. They will have a tough time of it in the end."

"Come along, let's take that promised trip and visit the Saint-Lazare," suggested L——.

We halted a taxicab and soon a mustached speed-demon, totally oblivious of our admonitions, bore us through an infernal pandemonium of motor cars to the Saint-Lazare. All around us were rival assassins, whose horns were honking at the same time.

We arrived at the venerable, but filthy prison, where we could discern, indelibly carved on the doorway—the very doorway through which Mata Hari, the famous spy, walked to her death: "Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité."

The Saint-Lazare is a prison and for that very reason the girl's first impulse is to flee or to hide from it. The fear of Saint-Lazare is enough for almost any girl to conceal the truth about her physical condition and thus scatter infection. She would rather resort to superficial remedies to conceal the ravages and signs of infection. And as long as this sanitary institution is lodged in the hands of the police, it keeps on putting the girls on their guard and shunning medical examination. The girls actually doubt the sincerity of regulation and fear that they are not examined because

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they are what they are, but because they have incurred the displeasure of the authorities."

* But the Paris regulations themselves seem futile anyway. The girls report for medical examination only once every fortnight. They should really be inspected every other day, and that would not be too often.

Too, the sanitary conditions that we saw in Saint-Lazare are conducive to the spreading of disease. We saw a young doctor, a rather insolent lad, use the same spatula for all the girls he examined, and to our amazement he wiped the spatula, between examinations, on a soiled towel. Two or three girls mounted the surgical chairs at the same time. Rubber gloves were not used.

At the ward this day there were a great number of women. Batches of new girls had just arrived and long lines of them were waiting to be examined by the doctors who did their job in a methodical and, what seemed to me, haphazard manner.

* If they were found to be badly infected, they were sent to the Grand Hotel, as the girls call the infirmary at Saint-Lazare. If they were found not to be in need of severe treatment, they were mise en demeure, that is, they were subjected to regular treatment and given medical certificate to that effect.

"Is nothing else done here in France to combat disease?" I asked one of the doctors. He shrugged.

"Women's associations have pursued a campaign

against licensed brothels. They also have been engaged for years in giving gratuitous treatment to cases they discover, and they have opened houses and homes for women and girls, who have been prostitutes but who have indicated a desire to return to ordinary life."

"I would like to quote what Dr. Gaucher, a famous French physician, specialist and clinical expert, has said: "Immorality creates prostitution and prostitution leads to venereal diseases. It becomes therefore first necessary to improve the social condition of women, so that they are not driven to engage in prostitution . . . and when they are driven to prostitution do not treat them harshly, but treat them like other human beings. Do not cast any stone at them, since no one of us humans lives in a glass house and can afford to throw a stone at them. Not even the Church can, who after all, should be the first ones to take these unfortunates into their arms. . . . When the girls are brought before a magistrate or Officer de la Paix, investigate their condition first. Do not subject them to rude treatment by police officers, who in more than one way are quite often to blame for the condition of these girls. Send them to a special humane officer. By saving the woman, you will also save the man. After all, woman only gives man what she has received from him in the first place."

NEW YORK

A Paradox

NEW YORK

A Paradox

It was pleasant to be back again in New York. I peeked through the porthole of my roomy cabin on the cosy steamship *Van Rensselaer* of the Royal Netherlands Steamship Company. We passed the Statue of Liberty, and Manhattan's outline emerged out of the mist. Tall masts and rakish funnels of the largest vessels were poking up all around us at this early hour.

The *Van Rensselaer* was piloted by one of the most jolly of Dutch skippers, Captain Haasters, who was so honest that he had to admit even once a sort of dizzy feeling in the head when swells set the vessel to rolling and who, a paternalistic soul, enjoyed his plate of rice, Indian style, good and hot and plenty of it, that made his table the medulla oblongata of the dining salon.

The Royal Dutch liner crept up the river and there rose into view a procession of towers—high and mysterious. The Whitehall Building stood, as it were, alone, like a huge sentinel, at the nose of the island, where once a handful of Hollanders traded a patch of land for a box of Geneva gin, until the spire of the Standard Oil, next door almost to the Bankers' Trust, had to make room for the Building of Singer, while all

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around, as far as my anxious eye could discern through the spacious porthole, were the docks and great ships at their wharves, appearing as toys, with gray cliffs in the offing.

I had actually returned to New York, the last sinful city of the Western world that I was to explore from the point of view of this volume.

I was conscious of a real feeling of excitement as my taxi rattled through lower Brooklyn, past the St. George and over the bridge into New York proper. I looked out of the taxi window as I sped up Broadway and I noted each landmark with greedy haste, and caught sight again of ubiquitous business men in their square-shouldered clothes, and equally ubiquitous business women and girls, trim and confident, hurrying to their offices. Little errand girls and office boys darted through a maze of traffic like fish through well-known waters. And I was struck again with an elaborate sameness of faces, with that air of "if one sees one—one has seen them all."

I was actually in New York, with its beauty hidden and visible, its squalors, its aspects of breathless loveliness, its skylines, masses of towering concrete and light and shadow—pathos and drama, revelries of freedom that made license out of liberty. A place where more than forty-five different tongues and vernaculars are spoken in a day and where, no matter where you hail from, there is a newspaper to your liking, since more than thirty are published in foreign tongues. And

New, York

where a great percentage of the populace is foreign born—more than 40 per cent, I have been told—and where even a greater percentage—some say 60 per cent—are either foreign born or the offspring of foreign bred or born parents. New York—that harbors more Italians than one would find in Rome, Milano or Florence, where there are more Germans than in any other one city except Berlin, where there are as many Jews as there were Jews assembled in Jerusalem, and Irish of which latter most influential melting pot portion there are over 225,000, or more than in Erin's largest city.

New York—a fairly drab burg by day, a loud and almost garish village by night at which time the faces of this hotchpotch of faces appear unreal. The main stem of America's amusement world and a feverish new world civilization, where divorces run a close second to murders and crime, and where there is more unhappiness in marriage and more confusion in relationship between men and women than in any other city under the sun.

There is so much hurry and agitation, which keeps the nervous system on the rack, while political, religious and social struggles manage to heat the imagination and to encroach on the hours for sound recreation, rest and sleep, that exhausted nerves are always in quest of increased stimulation. The result is a strange pathological, strictly New Yorkese type, nowhere else found under the sun, shining in abnormal sensuality and

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craving for pleasure, contemptuous of every ethical principle.

With my tour around the world finished, I discovered that Yokohama, Shanghai, Singapore, Port Said and Tangier were pretty bad places but New York may come close to earning the palm for depravity. There is a great difference, however, in New York. I had to delve deeply to find it. And this is true of America in general. For this is the country where individual morals are made the concern of the authorities and the state, where legislation denies the prostitute, and where the public mind has turned its back on the existence of vice, save when sensational exposés are made to stimulate the imagination, and even then it is still regarded as crime.

Basically, however, I found man's wickedness the same, whether practiced openly in European or Far Eastern seraglios or thriving in underground bordellos and call houses of hypocritical New York.

For there is in America a disgusting amount of hypocrisy about the matter, and in spite of laws and churches New York, so I have been told, harbors the most reckless, perverted and conscienceless muggs that ever were spawned. Now all this naturally depends on one's viewpoint, and I suppose your viewpoint is just as good as mine—maybe better. For it should be said that the authorities, on the face of every available evidence, give one the impression that there is little trafficking and prostitution going on in New York.

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The New York police force often has been accused of ineffectiveness and laxness in the execution of the laws against venality, but those who make this accusation overlook entirely that it is an impossible task imposed on a most efficient body of men who are hampered by the impossible nature of the statutes. I recall having read a clear definition concerning this very matter, set forth by Dr. Fuld of Columbia University who, in his book on the administration of the police, denied that the individual members of the New York police are inferior to those of other countries. He found them superior instead. But he said that their most serious defects are due to impracticable laws and regulations, forced upon a community that is too busy in mammoth idolatry. So what has happened? The administration of the laws is left to politicians with the result that weaker backboned policemen are wont to accept graft for not enforcing rules that, après tout, could not be enforced effectively anyhow, because of the fact that they ignore the nature of man and society. Corruption of the force, so says Dr. Fuld, is due entirely to the statutes.

And now let us focus our attention on the complexity of laws that prevail in the largest city in the Union and then come to realize why it is so extremely difficult to enforce them.

I perused that highly instructive and splendid piece of work on prostitution and its repression (?) in New York City, by Waterman, which answered many ques-

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tions that otherwise would have taken me many months to take from records and statutes. For instance, I learned that in former years prostitution was regarded as a type of social behavior, subject to governmental control. This policy ranged from that of toleration, that might protect or safeguard the health and good-order of the community, to that of repression through prohibitory enactments and enforcements, calling for wide legislation.

Under the United States Constitution the jurisdiction over offenses against morals has always resided practically with the state and not with the Federal Government. There we have at once one of the greatest weaknesses which lands a great number of criminals in this woman's business. Federal authority has only the right to punish the crime of bringing a girl or a woman into the country from abroad for immoral purposes and taking her from one state into another for immoral purposes.

It seemed, as I learned from Spingarn, that in New York a prostitute could be convicted under bewildering masses of statutes, among which we could name the New York Consolidation Act, the Code of Criminal Procedure, the Inferior Criminal Courts Act, the States Charities Law, the Tenement House Law, the Penal Law, Chapter 439 of the Law of 1892, and Chapter 353 of the Laws of 1886. Likewise the keeper of a brothel makes herself or himself liable to punishment under the Penal Law, the Public Health Law, the

White Slave Code of Criminal Procedure, the Liquor Tax Law, the Tenement House Law and the Immigration Law, besides a number of minor laws and statutes which have been overlooked in the shuffle. And though open and gross lewdness was considered an offense in common law, still fornication was not recognized as an offense, and convictions could be obtained only by referring to one of the statutes. It seemed no attempt was ever made to clear up this confusing system and similar systems, and the red light district flourished in every city of the Union, outlawed by statute, but undisturbed by police interference and ignored or whispered about by "decent citizens," with, of course, no possible regular means of state regulation or registration of prostitutes.

But not many years ago the public opened its eyes and the red light district was entirely abolished everywhere in America, I believe, except in Reno, Nevada, where it still thrives under tolerant regulation of police and city authorities. That such eradication was accompanied by grave abuses, graft, shielding of culprits and the enlisting of political assistance is understood. And that with every suppression of disorderly houses, additional girls were either sent to the street or back to tenement and apartment house prostitution quarters needs no denial.

The eradication of the districts took place in normal times when the existence of flagrant prostitution generally aroused public interest and resulted in the appli-

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cation of repressive methods. Especially where the more prosperous sections of a community are invaded, such as happened with Park Avenue, West End Avenue, Washington Heights and the like. Resort keepers, therefore, tried to avoid this danger for a time by conducting their activities in the more or less forgotten neighborhoods, the slums and run-down sections of the city, where they would escape the notice of persons concerned with civic betterment.

But since the depression, some property owners have found that they can no longer afford to turn away prospective tenants of doubtful character and reputation. Hence prostitution has entered and deteriorated business and residential neighborhoods---that formerly were immune, and there has been an increase in flagrant commercialized prostitution in New York, Chicago and other cities.

In the *Journal of Social Hygiene* some remarkable revelations were brought to light, relevant to the traffic in prostitutes in America. Here we read that during the four years of the financial depression, some of the largest cities in the Union have received an increasing influx of prostitutes and their souteneurs; at first slight, but now assuming serious proportions. These prostitutes have been fastened upon their underworld leeches, who have entrenched themselves again through political and other alliances. And as officials ordinarily dealing with this problem and those citizens and organizations formerly alert to such conditions were diverted

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to the urgent problems of relief, it is easy to understand that the efforts of the exploiters have been extremely successful.

In New York and Brooklyn, where the conditions have never been good, they have become particularly bad, as the law, never having functioned well, has broken down.

And as is so effectively described in the American Society for Social Hygiene's report, I cannot do better than repeat one of the graphic descriptions uttered by a resort keeper: "Graft, all graft, that is all it is. Do you know that in the district over here, the property is owned by one of the wealthiest and most influential politicians in town? When the depression set in, all this property here stood like a white elephant. He could not get any money by renting it to negroes even, so he got together with the big shots and they started to put the girls back in business."

"Traffickers in women and girls who remained in the business even when open commercialized prostitution was suppressed, began in 1929 to grow again into flagrancy. Openly conducted bordellos have sprung up all over the city.

"Coincident with the inauguration of the policy of repression and the closing of older resorts, was a marked increase in tenement prostitution, and houses that once were condemned came into favor as hotbeds for cheaper prostitution. Under procedures devised by one promoter, there have been established a number of

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agencies, that virtually amounts to a prostitute registry office. Customers have the means of making advance arrangements by telephone, through a call operator, who in turn by telephone, calls an available prostitute.

"In addition, there are also manicure and massage salons, all hotbeds for importuning and prostitution, whose strange advertisements appear in the cheaper newsies and certain types of magazines. Some of these places thrive again around the Seventies district. Then there are the taxi dance halls, while a great number of masseur advertisements are nothing else but soliciting media for homosexuals and for men catering to lusty madames," goes on the report.

"And while it is true that during the depression the profits have decreased, the cunning and ever alert traffickers adjusted themselves readily to changed conditions, by counting to make up for reduced prices by increased volume in trade. Third party interests have crept back into the game and prices have been reduced to meet the reduced pocketbook of the customer, and younger and more attractive inmates are provided as an additional attraction. Perverted practices are also featured and just because of cheaper prices, the volume of prostitution throughout the United States has greatly increased." So the report ends.

Some resorts I encountered myself in New York resembled old-fashioned parlor houses, others again were typical of the squalid, ramshackle, unsanitary

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cribs of twenty years ago. Others again, exclusively used for the business of prostitution, are camouflaged to represent small hotels and rooming houses such as we find plenty of in the Sixties and Seventies, from 42nd to 48th Street, as well as along Lenox Avenue, and in the Bronx. Even lower Brooklyn comes in for a great deal of the scarlet traffic. While districts in lower Brooklyn, near the waterfront, are given up to the sinful traffic and white and black girls join in the parade.

Hotel prostitution in New York is flagrant. In many hotels it is a regular business to provide rooms for transients while the clerks and bell hops seem to be in league with the underground procurers and souteneurs. The girls themselves follow the same routes as theatrical road shows and commercial travelers and know the best hotels to register in. They are acquainted with a group of hotel employees, who are card indexed and who serve as go-betweens in the procuration of customers, against a fat commission.

Dance halls are also recruiting grounds for prostitutes, especially the newest type of dance halls, the taxi dance halls or the dime jigs, which have gained immensely in popularity. The instructresses or hostesses are provided by the management and work on a percentage basis. Naturally a lucrative employment of this kind attracts many young girls and during the earlier depression period many of them were small town girls who had migrated to the bigger cities in

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search of employment. Many of them have become prostitutes as the income made in taxi dancing is too small to keep them from want.

There are indications of new encroachments of prostitution in the better residential sections, in the better apartment house districts on the upper West Side, also the area between Columbus and Amsterdam Avenues and covering even the side streets in the upper Sixties and lower Seventies from 57th Street to 110th, the Washington Heights sections, where a large number of kept women reside, and some of the best appointed apartment houses on West End Avenue and Park Avenue. Harlem has become the center of major importance, although Yorkville and the west Forties and Thirties also get a goodly share of the traffic. These conditions are in marked contrast with those segregated districts in the Far East, northern Africa and many Continental cities, whose systems of control and regulation at least keep their vice centers within bounds that do not pollute the entire cities.

Recent investigations have shown remarkable marked areas of concentration in which the district commonly known as the Black Belt has stood out quite prominently, particularly Harlem. For here the arrests and convictions are numerous in all the regions from Central Park to 149th Street, west of Fifth Avenue to Manhattan and St. Nicholas Avenues. Within these boundaries approximately thirty per cent of the total convictions for the whole of Manhattan

and the Bronx occurred during the period covered by the latest reports. This may mean, it is true, that in this district there is less ability to pay for protection or "fixing." But it is unquestionable that things in Harlem are particularly bad. Ever since the "advent of a Dutch man of Warre," which, as told in John Smith's *General Histories*, "sold twenty Negars," the problem of the colored man has continually changed and for more than three hundred years, since the first ones came to live among us, they have in some way or other to do with the traffic in vice, sponsored by whites.

At a late hour of the evening I had arrived in Africa—the Black and Tan Belt, after crossing the gay base of Lenox Avenue, and back in a circle to the Morning-side district, where, all aflame with pleasure and lure, was Harlem. Cabaret-dance halls, night clubs and chop suey places alternated with closed clip joints, restaurants and booze parlors. I beheld brown-skinned vamps and other gay colored silhouettes, romp from lantern post to post. I saw white women trot along, prancing and strutting with negroes.

Street after street I wandered through, swarms of people with banjoes and ukes strumming, gurgling sensual music, while from side streets one could almost hear the heavy snoring of the dusky inhabitants, sleeping the sleep of the jungle man. At corners I spotted couples cooing and indulging in a last minute petting.

I came to the Night Club, the colored and white

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man's hangout. It was almost dark in the place and yet there was enough light to feel one's way about. The room was filled to the brim. Music was loud as colored men's music always is. Vociferous horns and trombones and saxophones let go their harsh staccatos. And in the center, in a small space under one large lamp, were square-jawed, broad-shouldered, middle-aged, heavy-set, white men holding tight to their colored prey. Body to body, on their toes all the time, getting closer and closer, swaying and shuffling, with rhythms almost blurred, with the colored wenches unrestrained. At the little tables bordering on the tiny dance floor was a decidedly mixed public, with beaming smiles making short work of rich food—oysters and clams, lobster bisque, sole au gratin, lobster salad, with Russian and French dressings, frozen strawberries with whipped cream, they disposed of all this with enthusiasm, amidst noisy talk and chatter and jokes.

One fat negro woman, with bobbing heavy breasts, held the center of the dance floor, when the music stopped. Two negro girls joined her—they had tassels attached to their breasts, and they went through a queer motion while the Anglo-Saxon-Irish-Jewish audience looked on with broad grins.

And then the band began its trumpeting again. Soon one could not turn anywhere. One could not walk, for all around again were the big hips and big breasts, legs, sides, and colored lust.

This place is said to be the most exclusive in the

Black and Tan. Negroes—superbly dressed American women, waiters carrying heavily laden trays with booze for Americans that know not how to drink—whites on top of blacks, red and yellow lights flashing over moving bodies—a colored wench, gorgeously attired, with a face like a mongrel and a beetle brow—all gliding and prancing and swinging and prowling, impeded me as I fought my way to the door—where many feet deep stood another mob, aching to get in.

And then I stopped at a darkey bordello. I shoved open an innocent enough door on the avenue and brushed past a darker man that I had seen for days, who was leaving in a hurry. The odor of rotgut liquor stunk me in the face. I made my cautious way up two flights of unlighted, rickety wooden stairs and I ambled down a small hallway and knocked.

A voice answered and presently the door opened and an ebony face peered out at me. She looked me over suspiciously, as I asked for Maimy. She gave me another once-over, the door swung open. I entered a dimly lighted apartment that belonged to Harlem's Mulatto Maimy, owner and operator of the largest call house in the Black and Tan.

She could procure anything, from ebony darkey to white, black, yellow or crossed-anything, in fact, that wore a skirt. Maimy, so rumor went, was not afraid to use her hands, whenever necessary, and was particularly deft in the handling of a poker, for it had landed in a hospital the man who would not pay after

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bring their vices to an otherwise peaceful native; five per cent are owned and managed by whites and negroes jointly, and the balance are managed by colored people. Some of these dives cater exclusively to a special class of perverts and degenerates. Some are even hang-outs for criminals and in some I have encountered the best known hold-up men and petty thieves and pickpockets. Here it is that blasé, pleasure-seeking, sensation-hunting, neurotic society folk and degenerates turn to find their pleasures.

There is no room here to tell stories of the hide-outs where drugged cigarettes are consumed by black and white together, of the cellar rooms where negroes disport themselves lewdly, to the tunes of obscene songs, and where whites are frowned at and discouraged, of dives where homosexuals of both sexes cavort and posture, or of the famous "drags," the great balls where homosexual men indulge their fancies in gorgeous flesh-revealing costumes, as effective as any *Follies* chorus.

So let us look for a moment at another part of New York where, unauthorized yet unmolested, have congregated some of the queerest products, who have their own pathological way of escaping the repression of this difficult country.

I took the subway from Times Square at the rush hour, when the offices in the upper and downtown sections discharge their cargoes. Now I saw that the romantic darkenesses of the huge picture palaces of New

York are not the only places conducive to amorous inclinations on the part of swains or business-getting females, for here, as I tried to board one of these sardine expresses, men and women, girls and boys, were herded and thrown together. And the comfort stations in these subways are in one way, it seems, used as a means of helping the prostitute to get her trade . . . the following advertisement having come to my notice: "Phone . . . number so and so . . . ask for Jessie. Wear your steel pants. Oh boy, what a party!"

Well, I arrived in the Village in a state that baffled all description and minus three buttons on my overcoat—Greenwich Village where two-feminine partnership is tolerated and where they dance amorously and unashamed to the chorus of bisexuality.

I waited in one of their favorite restaurants, where I had an appointment. It was a sort of showplace, with hard benches and funny hangings and bohemian surroundings. As I looked around me, I beheld a number of delicate young men. Although the sight of such young men, dressed up in evening gowns, with painted lips and powdered face, going from table to table, greeting one another in high-pitched, mincing voices, was interesting enough, it does the things to one's stomach that a rough sea voyage might do.

While all about me were women, with figures from a drunken man's dream, innocent faces but cold hearts. No mistake about that. There were exotic-looking women too, whose hands fluttered with fascinating

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grace. Others moved about the place looking for tables with one lonely Romeo. Behind me irked the blatant noise of a big platinum blonde, her cheeks heavily smeared with rouge, to hide wear and tear, her eyes doctored to hide the dull gaze, and sex-lure painted lips, who was with a pot-bellied, bald-headed man. She is posing with her legs, skirts high and legs crossed. The only nice things on her, to egg him on, for she knows if she cheats he will soon have another and a younger one at that. For there are more girls to be had at depression rates in New York than there are loquats and grapes in Madeira off the African coast.

In walked two plain looking women. It seems as if the place is visited by a cold chill. Ah, I see. They are the kind that have the cause of lonely working girls at heart. Whatever they are after, they are temperance reformers and must belong to the Purity League, of which there are in America as many as there are windmills in Holland. Strange how they seeped in. For the bulky doormen had strict orders to keep wandering angels and torchbearers out.

Away yonder, dreary and mysterious howls the boat whistle—for we are near the docks. As the door opens I manage to get a glimpse of a street vendor selling peanuts or chestnuts. In front of the place, right across I behold a cop, as he swings his nightstick quite nonchalantly. . . . Until, in saunters the girl I had waited for.

She was slightly mannish, large and handsome and

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had a husky voice and she spoke a few words and bowed to acquaintances here and there, mostly girls.

After she gulped the drink I offered her, as any man would drink, she frankly told me of her experiences. She was only twenty-five years old and, so she said, was deeply in love with a younger and very feminine society girl, who used to come and visit her in the heart of the Village, where they had an apartment.

She smoked constantly and at intervals would take a hell of a long gulp. She was a personal supervisor in a large department store, where her job enabled her to pick out girls to her liking.

Following our little dinner in the basement of the Brevoort, at the coffee and the Courvoisier she began to reveal to me the story of her life. She talked as freely and frankly as man would talk to man. It was the old story of the tomboy girl grown up and finding New York a place to indulge her perverse desires, but told in unbelievably graphic detail. I had been promised frankness and was surely getting my share of it.

She talked for two solid hours, and guided by information that this girl had offered, I was able to carry my investigation even farther into the arcana of Lesbian love. I found cases that were far from any semblance of sanity, frightful orgies, staged by groups of these perverts, every form of homosexual relationship cultivated. I was offered an introduction to two girls who ran a house of prostitution for their own sex.

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I continued my investigations into the peculiar institutions of the great city. Within a few minutes walk from the Times Square district, backed apparently by mighty sex-mad plutocracy, is one of the many studios where hot films flourish. Here they are made by a notorious ex-Hollywood director and sold or rather leased to playboys and gayer girls with jaded appetites and bulging bank rolls and less brains.

And here in this studio, that I had come to as a guest of one on the inside, I met the brain of the outfit. All around me in this, what seemed a well-organized racket that made dirty films for lusty playboys in Park and West End Avenue apartment houses, there was activity galore. For projection men and camera men and a great number of hotsy-totsy girls, among whom were chorines and theatrical people, out of work, supported by the best known talents of perverts and Lesbians, male and female, were going hither and thither, going into projection rooms and emerging again later, exhausted. To cash in and go home or about their legitimate business.

The outfit, the brainstorm child of an ex-movie magnate, masquerades as a theatrical agency. As for the films themselves, every imaginable perversion, between male and female and male and male and female and female, is projected on the screen, while the catchy titles are sometimes hotter than the films.

One of the affairs—a film showing, that I at-

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tended in one of West End Avenue's sumptuous apartments, was to be a stag, but chorines, sales ladies of Fifth Avenue and Park Avenue stores, as well as bad-house operators, had come up too, to provide some diversion and color on this Sunday afternoon of a winter day, and when the torrid hour of film showing had come to an end.

The smart director, in this well-kept place, had come up himself to start the machine grinding, with a colored man at the piano, his sweetie a dancer and thirty or so patrons and girls, providing the *mise en scène*, amidst ohs, and ahs, groans and animal noises, which synchronized sound effects to these lusty scenes.

When the last flicker had died out, and the lights went up, the affair wound up in a free for all— And over all this presided an obese matronly woman who provided the drinks and the eats, for which the guests paid.

And so these film orgies go on unabated while New York produces some five hundred films a year, to be shown underground in bordellos, at stags and society exclusives, but also exported to all parts of the world.

But one of my most unusual experiences came a week or so later when I telephoned a Miss Jones, whose address I had secured from a newspaper man. She suggested that I drop in at her office. So, half an hour later, with an introduction in my pocket, I walked into the offices of the Blank Theatrical and Hostess

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Agency. What a peculiar name, I thought. Still, the business of being a hostess is a lucrative one, and far be it from me to associate the name with anything seamy.

A pretty young stenographer took my name and then said Miss Jones would see me in a moment. She continued busily at her typewriter. The office was typical of the hundreds of theatrical booking offices that line Broadway in the White Light district. Auto-graphed photographs of well-known actors and actresses literally covered the walls. A buzzer sounded and the stenographer said that Miss Jones would see me in her private office. I was confronted by a pleasant, middle-aged and efficient-looking woman, typical of the thousands of business women executives in New York. She greeted me by name and motioned to a chair beside her desk. She asked me how I liked New York, how long I had been here, and chatted about the weather while she signed three letters and tossed them in a tray.

"Well," she said, turning to me, "you want a good-looking companion for the evening, I believe. Tonight?"

I answered in the affirmative and she continued:

"We must be very careful, both for the sake of the girls and also for our clients. Mr.—— said you were from abroad and that he would recommend you. Will you show me your credentials?"

I was puzzled. Imagine, here was an agency that

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obtained at least a portion of its income from procuring girls for men. Here was a woman dealing, plainly speaking, in human flesh, in reality comparable to the madame of a common house of prostitution, asking me to show my credentials. Well, thought I, I must see this through. The situation, after all, is novel and interesting.

After showing her some of my papers, including the letter of introduction, she nodded approval and handed them back to me. Apparently I was fit, or maybe safe, to be introduced to some of her girls.

She asked me what type of companion I would prefer and how long I would require her services.

• "A slender blonde—for dinner, show, and possibly a night club," I said. •

"And for the night?" she inquired further.

No, I did not want the girl for the night and I was on the verge of confessing that I was looking for an experience, a chance to study a new system of this ancient profession, but I feared that she might not see my point of view, so I answered, "Maybe for the night too."

She drew a folder from her desk drawer and read off the descriptions of several girls. Commenting on one, she said: "Here is a stenographer, nice looking, well educated, a good talker, who may suit you. She works for a firm downtown but her hours are short and she is available tonight. She lives at home. She gets all her excitement from her engagements through

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this office. I know for sure you will find her suitable."

She showed me a photograph of the girl, dressed in evening clothes, but I wanted to see others. After going through several photographs of more or less handsome young women, she finally discovered that of an extremely pretty girl. I displayed interest and Miss Jones explained:

"She really is a darling—marvelous personality, dances divinely, dresses beautifully and is an excellent conversationalist—ideal for a party too. She comes of a good family and no man need feel the least bit self-conscious in showing himself with her in public. Her price is twenty dollars."

Realizing, however, that I had not yet definitely decided to buy the wares she offered, she hastily turned to another picture and to my questions concerning that subject's background, she replied:

"This one is Miss Winters. She is one of the best types I have and she would look very well with you. I believe you would like her. She does not photograph well, but I can assure you she is quite attractive. True, she has lived a bit, but she has been discriminating, to a certain extent, in her association with men. She lives with her family too, and they are very strict with her. She likes her work and I suppose she aids her parents financially, as most of our girls do. I'll vouch for her being a perfect and satisfying hostess. Her price is twenty-five dollars."

Still I was unconvinced, and she continued bringing out picture after picture, each time describing the young woman and naming her qualifications. I saw the photographs of at least twenty and she described briefly to me a dozen others.

• Finally she asked, "Perhaps you would like one of my French girls. This one is a coquette, look at her sweet, pouting little mouth. Her price is thirty dollars for ordinary demands . . . but it will be forty, if you would make unnatural demands."

For a moment my thoughts wandered back to the land of the cherry blossom and chrysanthemum, to Japan's Yoshiwara—the scene of probably the most remarkable attempt to solve the great problem of human society. For a brief moment I saw again that large weeping willow, the Willow of Welcome, under which I had passed in entering this so-called place of immorality, called, in literal translation, the Plain of Reeds. The favorite center of the courtesan class, the habitat of the Japanese demi-monde. Until I was called back to earth by Miss Jones, who was still rummaging among her photographs in an effort to find exactly what would please me. Eventually, I selected Miss Lincoln, one of the first ones placed on display.

• Miss Jones called a number and asked for Miss Lincoln.

"I have an engagement for you tonight," she told the girl. "Hope you are not engaged?"

Apparently she was not, so I said I wanted the girl

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to be at the hotel at seven that night, and gave Miss Jones my room number. I was about ready to leave when Miss Jones said that she must have her money in advance. I handed over the money, and while she was preparing a receipt, she added:

"Miss Lincoln is one of our nicest girls. Just an old-fashioned picture-hat child. She takes a cocktail and two highballs, never any more . . . so you may be sure that she will keep her head." She then added that she was glad to have been of service to me and hoped that I would have an enjoyable evening.

Promptly at seven, Miss Lincoln was announced, and she was even more satisfactory in appearance than her picture indicated. At first she seemed rather ill at ease and under a strain, but, after we had had a cocktail she lost much of her advertised modesty. She was frank, even in her language, and soon was ready to display a freer attitude, so characteristic of the girl of the primrose path the world over. Still she retained a certain lady-like reserve that proclaimed either a high development of her art, or inexperience.

I realized that down deep in her heart she really enjoyed the experience of meeting new men nightly in such an intimate way. She was delightful at dinner, enjoyed the show immensely and proved a most interesting companion. She told me all about her experience as a stenographer, how her employer had secured a place for her in a show, made the dreams of her young girlhood come true and how she had given her

body to him in gratitude. She told me how he had kept her in luxury after the show closed . . . until he married a girl in his own circle. She recounted then the bitter experience of having been kicked out by the man she had loved and how, gradually, she had drifted into the hostess business. She liked men as a rule, she said, and she found her present means of earning a livelihood pleasant and profitable.

"When I am passé—I mean when it is all over," she added philosophically, "I'll find an open window somewhere—anywhere—and I'll do a swan dive." Then came a gay little laugh.

And over all this stands the Law, whose proper interpretation and execution is vested with the police, who, so the reformers believe, are the defenders or rather the servants to look after the advancement of public morals. That such a thought is not entirely correct has been well proved by Judge Seabury in his investigation, for he showed up the great difference between vice and crime and proved that to treat both by means of the law and with the aid of police made attempted curves of vice worse than crime itself.

There was the Vice Squad, for whose facility of making immediate arrests the necessity of procuring a warrant was abolished. Enforcement, formerly left to the detectives in each particular precinct, was transferred to these Vice Squads, a special service division, taking its orders from Headquarters.

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There was a squad operating from Headquarters, or the 19th Division, working on roving commissions throughout the entire city. There were the Borough Squads, under command of a Deputy Chief Inspector, in charge of each borough, operative only within the territorial limits of the borough, and Divisional Squads, whose activities were confined to divisional limits. Their work was mainly of intimidation, and through threats, false arrests and the aid of agents provocateurs and stool pigeons they kept alive the business that provided them their gain.

Until the period of Judge Seabury and the death knell of the Jimmy Walker régime, when soliciting and disorderly conduct were the principal charges, an officer could arrest a woman only if he saw her accost three different men in reasonable time. Later, when public indignation, stirred by professional reformers, requested sterner methods, the professional stool pigeon was inaugurated in pay of a policeman, pretending to be the customer in a disorderly house or in an apartment house or tenement dwelling. And the specialty of some of them was the framing and bleeding of innocent women, as well as prostitutes.

There were two kinds of arrest: the direct case, in which the officer was the inducing factor, and the indirect case, in which the inducing factor was the stool pigeon, who, assisted by the police, would lead the girl on. All this is now, due to the investigation of Judge Seabury and a most efficient housecleaning

campaign undertaken by the New York police, in a great measure abolished, so one has reason to believe.

This system was made possible because, under the statute by which the Vice Squad operated and obtained its orders, the act itself was no crime, but when the woman accepted money for committing the act she committed a crime. But the man, the active participant, could not be held. One stool pigeon violated the traditions of the dirty craft, a Chilean, whose disclosures contributed the fireworks to the greatest sensation that the New York courts have ever seen, and led the way to the door that opened the conspiracy, showing how thousands of people had been falsely arrested on perjured testimony, while it also dragged with it the one and only woman magistrate New York had had. This is a black page now in the annals of the criminal history of the City of New York.

I have been informed that the Vice Squad methods have been changed and completely reorganized and, instead of having been entirely abandoned, two dozen men work exclusively on prostitution cases, and their greatest efforts seem to be directed against street prostitution that flourished especially in the White Light districts, the New York colored district and New York's Chinatown.

The courts of Manhattan which exercise criminal jurisdiction are the City Magistrate's Court, the Court

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of Special Sessions, in which felony cases are tried, the Supreme Court and the Woman's Court.

The Woman's Court of Manhattan, in the Jefferson Market Court Building, is a highly specialized court, treating only cases of women and girls involving prostitution or incorrigibility and generally associated in some way with sex delinquency. It is the first one of its kind in the United States.

The main stem of prostitution in New York, which is not small by any means, passes through the portal of the Woman's Court of Manhattan. Most of the women brought to this court for a hearing come under subdivision 4 of section 887 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, that reads as follows:

"The following persons are vagrants—a person (a) who offers to commit prostitution, or (b) offers to secure another person for the same purpose or for any other lewd or indecent act, or (c) who loiters in or near any thoroughfare or public or private place for the purpose of inducing, enticing or procuring another to commit lewdness or fornication, unlawful sexual intercourse, or any other indecent act . . . or (d) who in any manner induces, entices, procures a person, who is in any thoroughfare or public or private place, to commit any such acts . . . or (e) who receives or offers and agrees to receive any person into any place, structure, house building, or conveyance for the purpose of prostitution, lewdness, or assignation or knowingly

permits any person to remain there for such purpose . . . or (f) who in any way aids or abets or participates in the doing of any of the acts or things enumerated in subdivision four of section eight hundred and eighty-seven of the code of criminal procedure, or (g) who is a common prostitute, who has no lawful employment whereby to maintain herself."

In addition to the above, there is another section, No. 1458, subdivision that reads: "Every common prostitute or nightwalker, loitering or being in any thoroughfare for prostitution or solicitation, to annoyance of the inhabitants, or passers-by, shall be deemed guilty of disorderly conduct."

To the Woman's Court are taken a throng of unfortunate women and girls, picked up in Manhattan White Light district, the district of the principal theaters and other commercialized amusements, hotels, cafés and cabarets. And here we also meet with a continuous throng of visitors, sightseers, mingling with lawyers and court bondsmen, who like hyenas prey upon the unfortunates.

Cases of keepers of disorderly houses, when charged under the penal law, are tried as misdemeanors in the Court of Special Sessions. White slavery, compulsory prostitution of women, and pandering are punishable under the penal law; they are felonies and are punishable by imprisonment of from two to twenty years and

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are triable in the Court of General Sessions in Manhattan and in the Criminal Branch of the Supreme Court.

The laws of New York regard prostitutes and prostitution with an eye of severity, or extremity to say, the least, and they are immediately indexed as vagrants. But the law is very one-sided and ineffectual because owners of houses or operators of prostitution quarters are simply fined. And what is worse, the owner of the property containing the quarters, whether it be church, industrialist or financier, goes scot-free.

Now, wherever I traveled, when morals were mentioned they seemed to have reference to tabus on sex, and whenever people spoke of safeguarding public morals, they forgot to allude to a great number of things, including poverty, social injustice, unjust abuse and the checking of hypocritical injustices and immorality, with all its iniquities. Society thought it was doing a great deal when it made a fuss about nude and unclothed human bodies or the denotation of functions and organs by plain English words. Of course, morality can be construed in a hundred different ways, and there are a great many people in America who are moral because they have no provocation to be otherwise, while others are swayed by selfish motives. And then there are those—I should say the major portion—who are imbued with a consciousness that forces

them to behave morally no matter what be the temptation, because they are absolutely in awe of the consequences. If, however, the latter see a way of protecting themselves, in other words, are able to pinch the cat in the dark and make sure that the cat won't scratch, well, then, they quickly overcome their scruples.

Having just ended a trip that took me away thousands of miles, and having discussed in as many words the one important question that concerns moralists, churchmen and police authorities, I believe the feeling is gaining ground and the time is fast approaching that the seal of ignominy, which too many laws, or rather ill-drawn laws, place on prostitution and sex life and the hypocritical eye with which they are viewed, will be removed. But urbanization of the vast numbers of peoples of varied nationalities and ideas in America has increased the difficulty of carrying one set rule and program about morality, and the many existing interests make it extremely hard to find proper representatives who can be safely entrusted with the carrying out and the regulating of the moral question with which American life in general is confronted.

It is not possible within the limits of this book to recite all the ramifications and vicissitudes of the traffic that exists to this very day in our own fair city. Nor is it my desire in these premises to offer suggestions. Maybe these pages will focus public attention upon conditions such as now exist and cause public educa-

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tion in the fundamentals of problems of which many are totally ignorant.

But I would like to repeat the wise words spoken by Dr. Abraham Flexner, nineteen years ago, before the National Conference of Charities and Corrections, entitled: "Next Steps in Dealing with Prostitution"; a statement that is as true today as it will be, I suppose, a hundred years from now:

"Residual prostitution being a by-product—an inevitable by-product of individual weakness and social imperfection, every time a defective girl or boy is better trained or better protected, some of the loose tinder, that is apt to make a prostitute or to make a demand for a prostitute, has been put beyond the reach of harm. Every step made in the improvement of government—local—state—and national—in decreasing the consumption of alcohol—in improving popular education—in bettering home conditions—in rationalizing industry—in providing larger facilities for innocent and normal amusements—in improving our methods of dealing with the recreant and the delinquent—every one of these steps, whatever be the motive, with which it is taken, is a next step in dealing with prostitution."

And to which one might add, to take prostitution entirely out of the hands of the courts and have their cases handled by a separate court, for instance, a Court

of Human Relations . . . and to stop regarding prostitution as a crime.

And before I close, I would like to add a few more lines, written by Dr. Harry Benjamin, famous sexologist and surgeon, in the *Medical Journal and Record*, which echo the thoughts of enlightened sociologists all over the Western world:

"Education is needed, not laws. If a woman wants to sell her sexual favors, instead of giving them away, as so many do, that is her business. If she wants to employ a Madame to arrange meetings with clients, that is her business too. If a man wants to purchase sexual gratification, that is his business. Only if other persons' rights are violated, if a harm is done, for instance by fraud and seduction and if common decency is offended, then it becomes the business of the authorities. All else is rank moralization."

THE END

